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and  
Correspondence*

*of the Rt Hon.*

*Hugh Culling Eardley  
Childers*

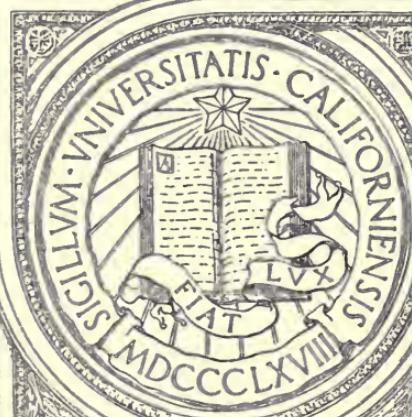
*by*

*Lieut.-Col. Spencer  
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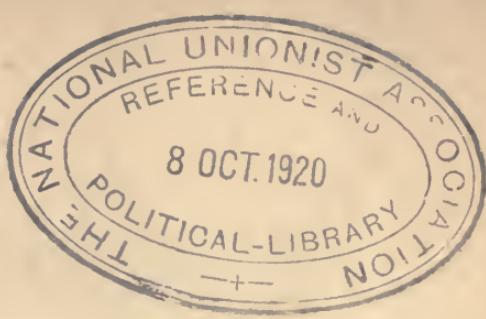




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THE LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE  
OF THE RIGHT HON.  
HUGH C. E. CHILDERS







Fordable & Young photo.

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Henry Wadsworth

From a photograph made in March 1883

THE LIFE  
AND CORRESPONDENCE OF  
THE RIGHT HON.  
HUGH C. E. CHILDERES  
1827-1896

BY HIS SON  
LIEUT.-COL. SPENCER CHILDERES, C.B.  
ROYAL ENGINEERS

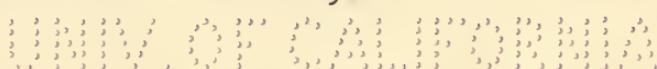
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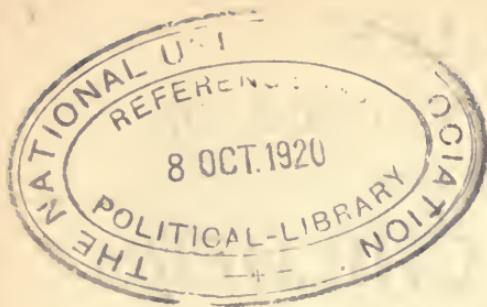
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## CONTENTS OF VOL. II.

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### CHAPTER X.

TRANSVAAL, 1881.

1880-1881.

Affairs at the Cape—Letters from Sir G. Colley—The Basuto War—The Boer Rising—Langs Nek and Ingogo—Majuba—Sir Evelyn Wood's Opinions ...	... ... ...	PAGE I
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------	--------

### CHAPTER XI.

ARMY ORGANIZATION.

1880-1882.

Introduction of the Territorial System—"The Horse Guards"—Sir Garnet Wolseley becomes Adjutant-General—Sir Frederick Roberts offered the Quartermaster-Generalship—His views on Army Reform—He advocates "khaki" ...	33
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

### CHAPTER XII.

TEL-EL-KEBIR.

1882.

The Crisis in Egypt—Bombardment of Alexandria—France stands aside—Seizure of the Suez Canal—Tel-el-Kebir—Offer of G.C.B.—The Institution of the "Royal Red Cross"—Mr. Childers and the Duke of Cambridge—Leaves the War Office ... ... ... ... ...	85
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

1883-1884.

	PAGE
Chancellorship of the Exchequer—First Budget—Question of the Suez Canal—M. de Lesseps and the Shipowners—Demands of the War Office—Mr. Childers suggests sending Foot Guards to Gibraltar—Second Budget—Light Gold and Conversion of Debt—Purchase of the Blenheim Raphael—Needs of the Navy—Financial Troubles of the Country	... 146

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE SUDAN.

1883-1885.

Hicks Pasha's Defeat—Mission of General Gordon—Fall of Berber—Battle of the Rival Routes—River Route adopted—Lord Wolseley to command—Fall of Khartoum—The Mahdi to be smashed—Russian Danger—Abandonment of the Sudan	... ... ... ... ... ... ... 175
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------

## CHAPTER XV.

## EGYPTIAN FINANCE.

1884-1885.

Bankruptcy of Egypt—Failure of the First Conference—Lord Northbrook's Mission—The Second Conference—Agreement of the Powers—Guaranteed Loan for £9,000,000—Financial Credit restored—Dawn of Prosperity for Egypt	... 197
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE BUDGET OF 1885.

1885.

Dissensions in the Ministry—The Budget—Fall of the Government	... ... ... ... ... 219
---------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------

## CHAPTER XVII.

## HOME RULE.

1885-1886.

	PAGE
General Election of 1885—Defeated at Pontefract—Returned for Edinburgh (South)—Home Secretary—The West-End Riots and the Police—The Prerogative of Mercy—Home Rule Bill of 1886—Final Retirement from Office	... ... 230

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## COLONIAL AFFAIRS.

1881-1885.

Federation—French and German Designs in the Pacific—Differential Duties	... ... ... ... 254
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------

## CHAPTER XIX.

## LAST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT.

1886-1890.

The Needs of the Church—Ecclesiastical Views—Tour in India—Peshawur and Quetta—The Khyber and the Khojak	... 265
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------

## CHAPTER XX.

## LAST YEARS.

1890-1896.

Failing Health—Resigns his Seat—The Financial Relations Commission—Death of Mrs. Childers—Last Illness—Review of his Character	... ... ... ... 287
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------

APPENDIX	... ... ... ... 299
----------	---------------------

INDEX	... ... ... ... 303
-------	---------------------



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

HUGH CHILDERS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY MESSRS. FRADELLE AND YOUNG	...	<i>Frontispiece</i>			
COLONEL WALBANKE CHILDERS, LIEUT.-COL. OF THE 11TH LIGHT DRAGOONS, GRANDFATHER OF HUGH CHILDERS	...	...	...	...	<i>To face page 48</i>
SELENA, WIFE OF COLONEL WALBANKE CHILDERS, DAUGHTER OF LORD EARDLEY	...	...	...	,,	164
MARIA, WIFE OF LORD EARDLEY. AFTER SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.	...	...	...	,,	172
SAMPSON GIDEON. FROM A PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. CULLING HANBURY, AT BEDWELL PARK, HERTS.	...	...	...	,,	216
JOHN WALBANKE CHILDERS OF CANTLEY. FROM A DRAWING BY GEORGE RICHMOND, R.A.	...	...	,,		238
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA	...	,,			260
BELVEDERE, KENT, THE SEAT OF LORD EARDLEY	,,				274
MR. CHILDERS AT MENTONE. FROM A PORTRAIT BY MILLY CHILDERS	...	...	...	,,	288
KATHARINE ANN, SECOND WIFE OF MR. CHILDERS	,,				292
CANTLEY	...	...	...	...	296



# LIFE OF THE RIGHT HON. HUGH CHILDERS.

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## CHAPTER X.

TRANSVAAL, 1881.

1880-1881.

Affairs at the Cape—Letters from Sir G. Colley—The Basuto War—The Boer rising—Langs Nek and Ingogo—Majuba—Sir Evelyn Wood's opinions.

THE Government of 1880 was no sooner free from the difficulties of the Afghan imbroglio than it was confronted by a yet more formidable rising. Without attempting to review the circumstances of the annexation of the Transvaal by Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet, and the refusal of Mr. Gladstone to reverse that policy, though he had attacked it, it will be sufficient to recall to memory that when Sir Garnet Wolseley quitted South Africa, in the spring of 1880, Major-General Sir George Colley took over towards the end of June the Civil and Military command in Natal, Sir Bartle Frere being still the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. With both Mr. Childers had corresponded from time to time, the latter being an old friend, and the former a schoolfellow of Cheam days. On his going to the War Office, Sir Bartle at once addressed him on Cape affairs :—

*From Sir Bartle Frere.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CAPE TOWN, April 29, 1880.

When I heard you were going to the War Office I sent a rather formal introduction to you for Captain Charles Mills, C.M.G.,<sup>1</sup> our permanent Under Colonial Secretary, now on leave in England. The Colonial Secretary here is Prime Minister, and Captain Mills, an experienced officer of Lord Clyde's school, has more knowledge than any other Colonial official of our military wants. But I hear he is ill, and may not be able to deliver my letter. So I will repeat much which I think you should know without delay.

This colony has been told in effect:—

“First.—Her Majesty's Government will help the colony to defend the Cape Peninsula, as containing ports, docks, arsenals, coal-stores, etc., in Table Bay and Simon's Bay, which are the keys of the Southern Atlantic and Indian oceans, and command the ocean route to India, as well as the capital, with the Government apparatus, banks, etc.

“Second.—Everything else must be done by the colony for itself—including security against, or provision to meet, all Kaffir wars and internal disturbances.”

Lord Carnarvon, as President of the Commission on Colonial Defence, can give you every information as to what has been proposed and done, and what remains to be done, in the way of batteries and their armament. When I came here I found everything in both bays (Table and Simon's bays) at the mercy of any unarmoured cruiser with a rifled gun on board. This is the case no longer. Batteries have been almost completed and partially armed, which, experts tell us, will render both ports fairly safe against anything but a squadron of armoured and heavily armed vessels. I believe the sums were in the Estimates for this year, which would have almost completed the works and their armament.

But the works will be of little use without trained garrisons. It was proposed that the garrisons should consist of a backbone of her Majesty's regular forces, supplemented with Colonial forces.

This Government, which has to provide this supplement, has not been consulted by Wolseley, nor made

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Charles Mills, K.C.M.G., Agent-General for Cape Colony.

acquainted with his views as to the numbers or composition of the permanent garrison; but I am told he proposes that we should be left with four companies of Infantry, and some few Artillery and Engineers—for the present—and, till he comes on his way home from Natal, I shall not be able to ascertain whether he proposes any augmentation in the future.

But unless he more than doubles the present garrison, it will be quite inadequate as her Majesty's Government's share of the defence of so important a post as this peninsula. I and my Ministers are civilians, and it is impossible for us to organize the Colonial share of the garrisons without more aid, instruction, criticism, and power of reporting, than I can ever get out of such a small body of trained soldiers commanded by whoever may happen to be the senior officer of the day.

I am convinced that we require here at Cape Town at least :—

First.—One complete regiment of Infantry for the two bays (Table Bay and Simon's Bay) without liability to furnish the detachments for St. Helena and Mauritius.

Second.—One at least, if possible two, complete batteries of garrison Artillery.

Third.—Two companies of Engineers.

Fourth.—A really efficient *selected* Colonel on the Staff, competent to be permanent commandant of the garrisons, and Lieutenant-Governor in the Governor's absence. He should be qualified not only to command here, in case of sudden European war, but to advise the Colonial Government how the Colonial forces should be organized and combined with her Majesty's forces, and also to tell you every year whether the colonists are doing their share of defensive duty efficiently.

I think if you consult Admirals Sir William Hewett or Sir F. Sullivan, or Generals Sir Arthur Cunynghame or Lord Chelmsford, or the members of the Royal Commission on Colonial Defence, they will generally agree with me that I have estimated at the very lowest what is needed to provide efficient defence for this key of the southern oceans, and that it will be bad economy to incur the risk of these ports being forced to give coals to an enemy's fleet, or to have those needed by our own squadrons destroyed for want of an efficient garrison to defend them.

The colonists are quite willing to do their own fair

share of the work with us. But we must support and instruct them, with a sufficient leaven of regular troops.

Of course an English squadron might soon rectify matters (if things went wrong). But is it wise to delay paying the moderate insurance of such arrangements as I recommend, in order to avoid the risks, for even a few weeks, of *Alabama* cruisers having free course in these seas?

What I have said refers mainly to this Cape peninsula, as the Gibraltar, Malta, or Aden of these seas.

But it is still more true as regards the self-defence of this colony. The great majority of the Cape colonists, as represented by the present Colonial Ministry, are not only able, but most willing, to undertake their own defence against all native African enemies, if they are allowed to do it their own way. They are prepared to do all you require in the way of self-defence; and I am sure they can do it as you wish.

As far as my judgment and experience go, any cruelty or severity which the natives may experience at the hands of Europeans arises from temporary exasperation at prolonged or unexpected resistance (like the atrocities in Badajos, or after the storming of any town) or in revenge for cruelties, real or supposed, or (and this is by far the most common cause) from terror and weakness; and the professional trained soldier is, in each of these cases, more merciful and less liable to be carried away by sanguinary impulse than the amateur volunteer.

The general temper of the European colonists, when not excited, is the reverse of cruel. They have more patience and toleration, I think, as a rule, for native shortcomings than people fresh from Europe; and if their system of defence were properly organized, you need never have any wars or cruelties attending them.

But for the needed organization we must have instruction and critics; and these we shall not easily find unless in the ranks of the regular army.

No doubt it is possible for a great genius to evolve a sound system of military or police organization "out of his own inner consciousness;" but such geniuses are not common, and I hoped to have had the aid of men like Sir Evelyn Wood to help our colonists, not only with his military experience, but with his talent for organization, his genial disposition, and consequent popularity. You have many soldiers who could command Chatham

garrison, but few who could do *all* we want here. Failing such a man, I should be glad to get any really competent Staff officer as *permanent* commandant of the troops here in garrison. It is simply absurd to trust such important interests to a casual senior officer as at present.

I hope to convert Wolseley to this opinion when I see him. He is a very brilliant and reliable general in the field. I only trust he will give due thought to what is to happen to us in South Africa when he and his troops and his numerous staff have returned to your hemisphere.

P.S.—*May 3.*—Wolseley has devoted two out of his two and a half days here, to the fortifications, and I have no doubt he will give you a very sound military opinion on all points.

As regards what colonists can or cannot do, and how they can be aided or instructed to do it, you will get more useful information from Captain Mills than from any one I know in England.

*To Sir Bartle Frere.*

June 22, 1880.

I received your note by Captain Mills, and a few days later your letter of the 29th April. I have had some conversation with Captain Mills, but I have not yet had an opportunity of discussing Cape military affairs with Wolseley. What you have said officially, and in your private letter to me, will be borne in mind when we have time and opportunity to take up the subject of the permanent arrangements for the command at the Cape and its strength. For the present, General Clifford will be left as he is. I quite appreciate all your remarks, both as to the character of the officer required to reorganize the local force and to advise and criticize, and also as to the strength of the command, the more so as up to a few days ago I have been a member of the Colonial Defence Commission, and I am aware of all that has passed on this subject, both since the Commission was formed, and with the small commission when there was fear of a war with Russia. The change of Government will not interfere with the work of the Commission, and we shall continue to have the benefit of their confidential advice. The strength of the Colonial command is not within their reference, but all the arrangements for the works of defence and for local forces will be dealt with by them, and witnesses from all the colonies with Parliamentary

government have been summoned. I shall always be glad to hear from you when you have the time to write to me.

Sir George Colley wrote very regularly up to the time of his death : the first letter preserved by Mr. Childers deals principally with the Basuto war, but refers ominously to Transvaal affairs.

*From Major-General Sir George Colley.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NATAL, September 26, 1880.

I am sorry to say my hopeful predictions about Basuto affairs have not been fulfilled, and the Cape Government seems now embarked in what may prove a long and serious struggle. I saw Mr. Sprigg<sup>1</sup> in Bloemfontein early this month and was satisfied, from what I then learnt from him, that hostilities were practically inevitable. I regret it very much, and think that they might have been avoided, without weakness or loss of position on the part of the Cape Government, if, when Mr. Sprigg first learnt the strength of the feeling on the disarmament question in Basutoland, he had been willing to accept a compromise in the shape of an arm-tax. This is, in fact, the manner in which I would myself, under any circumstances, prefer to deal with the Arms question, for I believe a heavy tax will, in time, secure a more complete disarmament than any absolutely prohibitory measure, which has the effect of uniting every one against the Government.

The question now is, how far is this disturbance likely to spread, and is the Cape Government able to cope with it? As regards the first, we have had several Basuto wars before this, notably the one between the Free State and the Basutos, which extended over several years, and the other native tribes in South Africa have not, so far, been affected by them ; so that I think we may reasonably hope the disturbance will be equally localized in the present case. As regards the second point, I believe the Cape to be perfectly able to deal with it, if they are in earnest and will really exert themselves ; the Free State, with not a quarter of the population and resources of the Cape, absolutely crushed the Basutos, and, but for our interference, would have annihilated them as a nation. But it took the Free State burghers a long time, and heavy sacrifices, to accomplish this.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Right Hon. Sir John Gordon Sprigg, K.C.M.G.

The Cape burghers do not at present show great zeal ; and I am afraid there is much truth in what Mr. Boshoff, an old Dutch colonist of Natal, and member of our Legislative Council, and brother of a former President of the Free State, said to me a few days ago, " Depend upon it, the Cape colonists will never really come forward, or turn out and fight as our Free State burghers did, as long as there remains a single British soldier in the colony, and they have the idea that they can get the fighting done for them by Imperial troops and a little money-payment." I do not, however, think that Mr. Sprigg will willingly apply for assistance from the Imperial Government. He sounded me a little on the subject when I met him at Bloemfontein, and amused me by throwing out the idea that as part of the theory of responsible government was that the people on the spot were the best judges of what was for the interests of the colony, the Home Government ought to accept their judgment on such matters of general policy, and, if necessary, assist them in giving effect to it. I suggested, however, that he would hardly accept that theory if one of his local road boards undertook works altogether beyond their means, and I threw out a hint as to whether a surrender of their charter might not be a necessary condition of assistance from the Home Government. The Cape Government *can* perfectly deal with this matter, and I think ought to be made to do so unaided. I have had applications from them for assistance in raising levies in Natal, and, so far as any assistance short of direct Government action is concerned, am most anxious to give it them, but I think it desirable that all such levies should be raised by the Cape Government, and not by us. I must say it would be very ill-natured of us not to give them assistance in this respect, as they will relieve us of a number of roughs and loafers, drawn together here during the war, and who have been a nuisance to us ever since.

I have now, I hope, definitely arranged for the withdrawal of another regiment from the Transvaal, reducing the garrison there to two infantry regiments and one battery.<sup>1</sup> Lower than this I do not think it would be

<sup>1</sup> In reference to the reduction of the Transvaal garrison, it is fair to Sir George Colley to record that upon taking up his appointment it was strongly urged upon him to turn his immediate attention to this reduction. The King's Dragoon Guards were, under orders from home, to embark for India, and in the then condition of that regiment a reversal of this order would not have been desirable. The infantry

prudent at present to reduce it. I shall be telegraphing and writing officially on this subject in a few days. The King's Dragoon Guards embark for India to-morrow ; but I am afraid I shall not be able to effect the large immediate reduction I had hoped in the transport, which will be required until we have withdrawn the other regiment and re-arranged our posts. At present, owing to the long drought, and failure of some of the principal carriers, local transport is hardly to be obtained. However, when the third regiment has been brought down, probably about the middle of November, by which time also the grass will be good again, and the ordinary carrying trade in operation, I hope to be able to carry out the reduction I propose, which will diminish the size and cost of our transport establishment to about one-third of their present scale. I shall still, however, for a time have to maintain a transport establishment considerably in excess of what would ordinarily suffice in peace-time. The reduction in the Transvaal garrison has been but grudgingly assented to by the Administrator, and officer commanding the troops in that district—and, in face of possible mass meetings and disturbances on the part of the Boers, we must keep an efficient moveable column organized and equipped for immediate action, and maintain sufficient transport to prevent the malcontents starving our posts by refusing to supply provisions or hired transport.

*To Sir G. Colley.*

November 5, 1880.

I read with much pleasure your letter of the 26th September ; and although the state of things within the Cape Colony is very disappointing—and to a certain extent the mischief spreads to the neighbouring colonies—I am glad that you have been able to make so good a beginning. I fear, with you, that the Cape people will never thoroughly rouse themselves until they are as much obliged to provide for their own security as Australia and New Zealand ; but the time has hardly come, if it ever will, when we shall be

regiment above mentioned (the 58th), though withdrawn from isolated and ineffective stations in the Transvaal, was concentrated in Natal and retained there, where it subsequently proved of great service in Sir George Colley's measures for the protection of Natal, and for diverting the Boer forces from the invested garrisons, while he was awaiting reinforcements.

able to withdraw British troops from what, to the Empire, is not merely a colony or a cluster of settlements. It will be our duty, I believe, to make our naval establishments thoroughly secure from surprise or insult, but, beyond that, I hope that ultimately the colony will be required to shift for itself. In whatever you do to help the Cape Government to raise men, I hope that you will be able to act through your civil and not your military staff. The difference may appear trifling, but advantage may be taken of the veriest trifle to draw us into responsibility for what we and our predecessors thoroughly disapprove. Some day I should be glad to hear from you what you are doing to keep the peace in Natal ; and, without using your pen, if you will send me any papers you know will interest me, you may be sure that I shall always read them. I was very sorry to hear a few days ago that Lord Lytton was not well, and was obliged to keep quiet. But I believe it was nothing serious. Thank you for telling me about your brother. I will try to see him when he passes through town.

On the 19th of December Colley telegraphed the news of the Boer rising.

*From the Earl of Kimberley (Colonial Secretary).*

KIMBERLEY HOUSE, December 20, 1880.

The news from Colley of the outbreak of the Boers is very grave.

I think a regiment should be sent as soon as possible to reinforce the troops under Colley's command. I have desired an official letter to be written to you accordingly.

Colley will require all his present force to cope with the Boers ; and the state of affairs in Basutoland and the Transkei territories requires that troops should be left in Natal to protect the border.

I have full confidence in Colley ; but we ought to give him the means of prompt and efficient action. It will be a terrible disaster if Natal should become disturbed, and Colley's last letter to me states that there are symptoms of sympathy between the Natal natives and the Basutos. Some of the Natal natives had crossed the border to join the rebels.

Mr. Childers at once ordered out the infantry and

cavalry which Sir G. Colley asked for, and Lord Kimberley replied :—

I am extremely glad you have so promptly authorized the cavalry regiment to be sent which Colley has asked for. Your promptitude in despatching the infantry regiment has had a good effect on the public mind.

*To Sir G. Colley.*

*December 30, 1880.*

I received, on the evening of Sunday week, the 19th, just before leaving town for Christmas, your first telegram with the news of the Boer rising, and on Christmas eve that of the attack on Colonel Anstruther's force on the march.<sup>1</sup> I need hardly tell you how much I personally sympathize with you in the very serious struggle in which you suddenly find yourself engaged. You will have all possible support from me, and you will have heard that we have even gone beyond your demands in the preparations we are making to reinforce you. I have only time, after an unusually long Cabinet, to send you these few lines.

The outbreak became a rebellion and the whole Transvaal was in arms.

*From Sir George Colley.*

*GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NATAL, December 26, 1880.*

I am very sorry that this country should again be turned into the scene of war, and become a source of anxiety, trouble, and expense to the Government, but I trust you will not consider my demands, viz., one regiment of infantry, one of cavalry, and a battery of artillery, excessive. Had we not had the Basuto and Pondo difficulties on our hands simultaneously, I should have considered the force at my disposal sufficient under ordinary circumstances to maintain peace in the Transvaal ; and had we been able to avoid a collision until I came up, or had the result of the first encounter been in our favour, I think that one additional infantry regiment would have met our requirements. But this unfortunate affair of the 94th, like Isandhlwana on a smaller scale, has terribly handicapped me. I cannot yet say what its full effect will be, but it is certain greatly to encourage the rebels, to turn the scale

<sup>1</sup> At Bronkerspruit, 250 men of the 94th Regiment, under Colonel Anstruther, who were marching to the relief of Pretoria, were either killed or taken prisoners.

with many disaffected, to make some feel that they have committed themselves too deeply to turn back now, and to discourage the loyal. My object will still be to hasten up with the forces at my disposal, and try and bring matters promptly to an issue. But there are ugly rumours about of a very strong feeling among the Dutch inhabitants of South Africa generally, and of the insurgents receiving something more than sympathy from the Free State Boers. I feel, therefore, that I must have support, and that I cannot leave Natal unguarded. Artillery have a great moral effect among the Dutch, and a battery of artillery will do more to keep the peace than several regiments, and cavalry are absolutely necessary to me if we are to have anything like a prolonged guerilla war.

I have sent you officially all the information yet received regarding the disaster to the 94th. I entirely approved of Colonel Bellairs's orders calling in these out-lying detachments; and as the orders were issued on the 23rd November, and the troops were expected at Pretoria by the 10th December, while the Boer meeting was still fixed for the 8th January, he had no reason to fear any interruption. When the news of the sudden and vigorous action of the Boers reached me, I was a little anxious about this and another detachment of the 94th. But as both parties numbered about 250 men, and were marching at a considerable distance from the main rendezvous of the Boers, I was really more afraid of an accidental and undesirable collision than of any disaster to them. One detachment was on this side of Standerton, and I at once hurried it up to that point, where it is now strongly entrenched. The other (Colonel Anstruther's), I was not in communication with, but, as I heard from Sir O. Lanyon from Pretoria, under date the 18th, and he then made no mention of it and expressed no anxiety, while he spoke of the Pretoria garrison as ample for all emergencies, I imagined Colonel Anstruther's detachment had joined, and ceased to be anxious. From the accounts received as to the distribution of the Boers and strength of the attacking force, I find it difficult now to believe that it was more than 250 British troops ought to have been able to give a good account of, unless taken at some very great disadvantage. I believe, however, despatches are now on their way which will throw more light on the affair.

We have all sorts of rumours of collision at Potchefstrom; some of them connected with painful stories of

women and children having been killed, either by our guns shelling the town, or (as is also stated) in a fit of revenge by the Boers, enraged at the losses they suffered from our guns. I am sending you officially all news I have.

The forces at my disposal, and on the march up, have been detailed in my telegram and report. Several large drafts, numbering in all about 350 men, have arrived within the last two days, and will form valuable reinforcements. Some of these I shall use for my lines of communication, setting free the companies now engaged holding posts—and in this way I hope to collect fourteen companies of infantry, four guns, and 120 mounted men for my operating column. If the news from Pondoland continues satisfactory, I may withdraw one or both the companies now at Harding, and so further increase my operating force. I have sent some of the Natal Mounted Police to Newcastle, and some more to Ladysmith to watch our border, and keep me informed of any movement of the disaffected Boers beyond our border. But any action of the Natal Government and Colonial forces will be very jealously watched here, as Natal contains a large number of Boers, closely connected with, and warmly sympathizing with, the Transvaal Boers.

I have noted your wishes about not employing my military staff in anything connected with giving assistance to the Cape Government, but I trust those wishes have been already complied with, as everything was done through my Colonial Secretary, who has been very warmly thanked by the Cape Government for his personal share in the organization and equipment of the forces raised, and for the assistance generally rendered. I have, throughout, thought it very desirable that the several Colonial Governments should be brought in close communication in these matters, and made to feel their inter-dependence.

The Basuto war drags on without much result, but affairs in the territories directly intervening between this and the Cape Colony are looking better, and we hope soon to have our telegraphic communication restored. At present, however, my attention is naturally mostly directed to the Transvaal.

I hope I may be able to write more cheerfully another time, meanwhile I can only thank you for the ready support given me.

*To Sir George Colley.*

January 27, 1881.

I have received your letter of the 26th ult., and I am much obliged to you for writing to me so fully. All that you have done, so far as we know it, is entirely approved, and you will find us very anxious to comply to the utmost degree possible, with your requirements. I am a little exercised at the non-arrival of the *Tamar* from Gibraltar. On the other hand, the *Euphrates* has reached Durban earlier than we expected, and I hope that the *Crocodile* will have made as good a passage. I hope you will not spare the telegraph in keeping me informed of any matter of importance. You must assume that when you telegraph *en clair* there is some risk of publication, but as you have the cypher you can always avoid this. The only piece of information which you might perhaps have told me by telegraph, so far, but which reached me from another source, was your project of a column from Capetown *via* Kimberley. Both we and the Colonial Office were interested in knowing that you had projected this movement, and that from a military point of view it met with General Smyth's<sup>1</sup> concurrence. May I ask you to give instructions for prompt communication of casualties *by name*, for the information of the men's friends? There was a great complaint of absence of promptness in this respect during the late Afghan and South African wars. There is much anxiety here about the fate of Colonel Anstruther, the newspapers reporting his death, while we have no information from you on the subject.

Knowing how fully occupied you must be, I will not trouble you with more letters official, or private, than you will like to receive. I hope that Mr. White has reached you, and that you have been relieved of some tedious work by his assistance. You may rely on my best support in your very arduous work.

*From Sir George Colley.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NATAL, January 1, 1881.

I feel very grateful for the prompt and thorough support that has been afforded me from home in these

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Sir Leicester Curzon Smyth, K.C.M.G., commanding the troops, and acting Governor of Cape Colony. Had been Military Secretary to Lord Raglan in the Crimea. Died, 1891.

Transvaal difficulties, and only hope I may prove myself worthy of the confidence you have been good enough to put in me. It is naturally rather an anxious time, and my anxieties are not lessened by the absurd rumours and panics abroad in Natal. But the announcement of the large reinforcements which are coming out has already done much to restore confidence, and when they arrive all real cause for anxiety will be over.

My present military position is as follows :—

Excluding the garrisons of Potchefstrom, Pretoria, etc., which are practically invested by the Boers, and consequently out of my command, I have—

At or near Newcastle . . . .	7 companies infantry, 4 guns.
At Wakkerstrom . . . .	2 companies infantry.
At Standerton . . . .	4 companies infantry.
On the march half way between this and Newcastle	2 companies infantry.
Just left this . . . .	4 ditto, 2 mounted troops.

Here I have nothing but boys and invalids. I am bringing one company, 60th, up from Harding to garrison Fort Napier here, and leave one company at Harding, as I do not like to let the Pondos see us withdraw altogether from that border.

About the 15th I hope to have concentrated at Newcastle thirteen companies infantry, four guns, and two mounted troops, with which to enter the Transvaal ; and by the 25th I should hope to be at Standerton with about sixteen companies infantry, a hundred and fifty mounted men, and four guns. Two more guns are being equipped, but I do not know if they can be up in time. This will be about the time that the first reinforcements will be landing ; and I shall then have to determine whether to risk battle and march at once to the relief of Pretoria, or wait another month or more till the newly landed reinforcements can reach me.

All this I am afraid will seem slow work to the invested garrisons and to anxious spectators, but the distances are very great. Some of the troops, when they reach Standerton, will have marched nearly four hundred miles, while a considerable part of the force has had to be, so to speak, extemporized, *e.g.* the mounted corps, and two out of the four guns, which are manned by infantry soldiers. Some of the troops, too, that marched this morning only landed

four days ago from England as unarmed drafts, and but for the intelligent zeal with which commanding officers, staff, and the heads of the commissariat, ordnance and medical departments have all worked together, I could not have got so much done in the time. We are still unfortunately liable to delays, and upsetting of all calculations of time, by the flooding of the rivers, but I hope that the exceptionally heavy rains we have had during the earlier part of the wet season may be followed by a comparatively dry time.

I have been increasing my demands gradually as the situation developed, partly because every man more than required tends to retard rather than to expedite operations, and partly because, if a very large force ultimately appears necessary, I would rather receive it by instalments, for whom I can make all preparations before they arrive, than receive at one time a large force for whom my local organization of supplies, transport, etc., could not be prepared in time—as happened in the Zulu war.

I have received from you an inquiry regarding oats. I did not telegraph for them in the first instance, because we were in negotiation for a large local supply; but it turned out these would not do, and I accordingly asked for two million pounds. I have asked that the commissariat supplies required may be sent out to me in monthly instalments, so that I may not be overcrowded with stores, some of which do not keep very well, and may also have the power of stopping the supply at any moment that seems desirable.

Our officers at Standerton and Wakkerstrom—Major Montague, 94th, and Captain Saunders, 58th—have done extremely well, and so strengthened their positions that they think they can defy the Boers; the garrisons of both are in excellent spirits, and hoping the Boers may attack them. I am fortunate in having men who take this view of matters in the front, as a very little show of anxiety on the part of the officers soon demoralizes the men; and at first, when the news of the 94th disaster arrived, there was a tendency to imagine that all our advanced garrisons were dead men.

The rumours now are that the Boers mean to collect the whole of their force to attack me when crossing the boundary. It will be very good-natured of them if they will thus give me the opportunity of meeting them close to my base, instead of having to march two hundred miles further

in search of them ; but I fear the news is too good to be true, and that they will only collect a small force to harass me.

I have received an offer of a naval contingent with guns, gatlings, etc., from the Commodore, and have accepted it so far as a gatling and rocket detachment, both of which will be very useful to me in the front, while they do not require much transport, which of course is my chief difficulty. I start myself for the front in five days' time, and hope next time I write to be able to speak with more certainty of the state of affairs in the Transvaal. I cannot yet say whether I shall require all the reinforcements provided from India and England, but I will send on home any of those from India that I can spare.

*From Sir George Colley.*

CAMP MOUNT PROSPECT, February 1, 1881.

I regret that my news should again be bad,<sup>1</sup> and I cannot sufficiently thank you for the continued confidence which you have been good enough to extend to me. The telegram conveying her Majesty's gracious message which I received yesterday, was indeed an encouragement, and I only trust I may be found to deserve it. I think I was justified in attacking with the force I had, considering the importance to Pretoria and Potchefstrom of early success—and the attack had all but succeeded. Had Major Brownlow's force consisted of trained cavalry, I have hardly a doubt but that the position would have been ours, and without much loss. But one cannot blame mounted infantry on untrained horses for not doing all that trained cavalry might have done. I can add little to my official report, and a rough sketch which I have sent to Sir Garnet Wolseley, and which probably he will show you, will explain the ground better than a verbal explanation can. A more accurate sketch, which was being prepared by Major Poole, my Assistant-Quartermaster-General, has unfortunately been lost with him.

I am in deep distress at the loss of so many good men, and personal friends. Colonel Deane especially is a loss to the army. But the cheering feature in the whole affair is the admirable spirit shown by both officers and men, and which does not appear to have been in the least affected by this reverse. I cannot speak highly enough of the way the 58th came out of action ; and although

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Colley crossed the Ingogo River, and on the 28th unsuccessfully attacked the Boers at Lang's Nek.

Lieutenant Jopp, who brought them out, is only a young subaltern, I hope it may be found possible in some way to recognize the manner he commanded them.

My plans for the future are to hold on in my present position until I get sufficient reinforcements, and then attack again. I expect to have the 15th Hussars and 2/60th and 92nd Regiments here in about a fortnight, and that with my present force should, I think, suffice. The English reinforcement with Sir E. Wood may be expected about a fortnight later, and will form a supporting column; and if all goes well, I propose to leave Sir Evelyn to complete the pacification of this part of the country (Utrecht, Wakkerstrom, and up to Leydenberg), where he is well known and very popular, while I push on to Pretoria, where my duties as governor will require my presence. I am not at present horsing the mountain battery sent from India, as with the artillery already here, and that arriving from England, I think I should have enough; and I am not much impressed with the value of mountain guns in this country, their range not being very much greater than that of the Boers' rifles, while the number of horses accompanying a battery require a large supply of forage, and add heavily to my convoy.

I was much obliged for your offer of more reinforcements, but I see nothing as yet to lead me to doubt the force arriving in the country being ample for all requirements. I do not think the war spirit is spreading in the Free State, and President Brand<sup>1</sup> is doing all in his power to check it. I did feel some anxiety while Natal was practically denuded of troops, but now that a continuous stream of reinforcements is flowing through it, that anxiety is practically removed. I am glad you have approved of my action in the matter of belligerent rights. I have been several times pressed to issue proclamations defining their position, but have refused to do so, as I did not see what object was to be gained, except perhaps to embarrass myself in one or other of my dual capacities. In a general order I issued to the troops I purposely used the words "war" and "rebellion" indifferently; and I saw no reason why I should not maintain relations of courtesy with the Boer leaders in my capacity as general, even if I have afterwards to hang them in my capacity of governor. I hope, however, no such stringent measures will become

<sup>1</sup> John Brand, son of Cristofel Brand, a former Speaker of the Cape House of Assembly.

necessary. So far they have acted generally with moderation, and they have expressed their horror of the murder of Captain Elliot, and determination to punish the offenders. Their commandant, General Joubert, objected, perhaps not unnaturally, to my sending aid to the wounded on the hill so long as I maintained my advanced position and appeared prepared to renew the battle, but afterwards readily acceded to my request; and although some of the regular wild Dutchmen were a little rough and rude, the more respectable English-speaking men among them were extremely civil and gave every assistance. One young officer, who had remained helping the wounded till escape was impossible, they allowed to leave unmolested. Some of them took the opportunity of explaining to our officers that they were "commandir," and there entirely against their will.

There are rumours that Kruger, with the bulk of the Heidelberg force, has arrived at the Nek, and that Pretorius is coming here from Potchefstrom. If this proves true, we may expect the next action to be a decisive one, and perhaps the pressure on Potchefstrom and Pretoria will be sufficiently relaxed to let the garrisons shake off the investment. The health and spirits of the troops continue excellent. When we marched out the other day we had only two sick out of a force of over thirteen hundred, and although our hospitals are now crowded with the wounded, and many of the wounds are severe, the climate and bracing mountain air (we are at an elevation of over five thousand feet) is all in their favour.

As stories are about of Boers stripping our wounded and dead, I may mention that in every case they took away the arms, ammunition, haversacks, biscuit (which they eat greedily), and any ornaments or valuables the men or officers had, but in no case that I could ascertain did they take their clothes off them.

*To Sir G. Colley.*

*February 10, 1881.*

I was glad to receive your letter of the 1st January, and I have since had an opportunity of reading your letter of a few days later to the Duke of Cambridge. Your letters are perfectly clear and satisfactory, and show that you thoroughly appreciate the position and the consequences of the Boers' action as then known, and of the success or failure of your contemplated proceedings. On the 28th, a few hours after my last letter to you was posted, I received

your account of the repulse at Lang's Nek. I need not say that you had the sympathy of us all in this misfortune, and from the telegrams which you have received you will not have doubted on the one hand how anxious we have been to give you all the assistance you require, and on the other not to trammel you with instructions or restrictions in the execution of your very responsible duty. It will be some time before we receive despatches with details of the engagement and of your views both before and since, and I need hardly say I shall peruse them, not only with interest, but with full expectation that they will justify your proceedings. I am very glad to receive so prompt a reply to my telegraphic inquiry about the treatment of the enemy. Neither Lord Kimberley nor I had any doubt as to what your answer would be, but it has allayed somewhat unreasonable apprehension in certain quarters that your prisoners would be treated otherwise than in accordance with the rules of civilized warfare. Yesterday arrived the news of your hard-fought action at the Ingogo.<sup>1</sup> You will appreciate the trust placed in you by my telegram of this afternoon, offering you two regiments and a wing of infantry, two regiments of cavalry and a battery, besides drafts to fill up your infantry regiments now in the field. With Ireland on our hands and a threatened Ashanti war, I cannot say that we can spare so large a force as easily as in quiet times, but we must leave no stone unturned to terminate the unpleasant task to which we are committed.

Meanwhile it was determined to send the two cavalry regiments at once.

*From Lord Kimberley.*

February 11, 1881.

If, as I fear is the case, Colley's communications are cut off, and he is in fact surrounded, ought we not to determine at once to send the two cavalry regiments without waiting for his answer? The accounts in the *Standard* this morning are not encouraging as to our position. I hope the officer in command of the reinforcements arriving at Newcastle is a good man. It won't do for us to be

<sup>1</sup> On the 8th of February, Sir George Colley moved out of his camp to reopen his communications, which were threatened; he was attacked on the Ingogo; the attack was repulsed, but with heavy loss on the British side.

continually beaten by the Boers, which seems to be what the fighting amounts to practically so far.

*From Sir George Colley.*

ARMY HEAD-QUARTERS, MOUNT PROSPECT, February 16.

I find that my despatches intended for the last steamer have missed it, owing to temporary interruptions of our communications, so that they will go with this letter. I cannot add much to what I have said in them. No soldiers could possibly fight more steadily than the men of the 58th and 60th have done in these two engagements, and they are as cheery and confident as ever. But the want of good mounted troops told very heavily against us, and our soldiers are not as trained skirmishers and shots as the majority of these Boers, who from their childhood have lived in the country and to a great extent by their guns, and are used to stalking and shooting deer.

Our artillery does not at all compensate for our want of mounted troops, for the Boers keep cover too well, and when exposed move too rapidly and in too loose order to give artillery much chance. I shall now shortly have two cavalry regiments up, which will put us on more even terms; but I was glad to accept your offer of a third cavalry regiment, in case the operations drag on. I have not much faith in mounted infantry for this work. They are excellent as against Kaffirs, but they are no match for the Boers, being worse riders and worse shots. The Boers think little of them, and they themselves acquire a sense of inferiority, and of want of confidence in themselves which is fatal. In time no doubt this would wear off. But it takes time to train them, and that is just what we have not to spare. The Boers dread regular cavalry, because they know them to be as a rule better mounted than themselves, and therefore not to be shaken off. It is this advantage of cavalry which has made me attach importance to the regiments bringing their horses with them. The drain on Cape horses from the Zulu and Basuto wars has been so great that it is not easy to collect the class of horses required for a cavalry regiment, and when the regiment does get them they are to a great extent untrained, and the men feel that they go into the field at a disadvantage.

Since I last wrote a considerable force of Boers has moved round our left flank, behind the Drakensberg, and

round Newcastle, and taken up a position about ten miles beyond that on the Maritzburg road, to intercept the reinforcement. Sir E. Wood, however, who commands them, has already a picked force—the 2/60th, 92nd, and 15th Hussars—collected on the Biggarsberg, and large reinforcements in his rear, and I trust will find no difficulty in pushing aside any force the Boers can detach to stop him.

I am afraid there is no doubt that they are receiving large assistance from the Free State, despite of the efforts of President Brand and his government; and it is remarkable how they always cling to the Free State border as a secure retreat in case of reverse. This was particularly remarkable at the Ingogo, where, notwithstanding their advantage of force, they never ventured anywhere on our east where they could possibly be intercepted.

You will see I have spoken strongly of the conduct of the young soldiers of the 60th at the Ingogo, but not a whit more strongly than they deserve. It is a trying thing at all times to withdraw at night after a hard day's fight and heavy losses; and though I had secured the passage of the river, we had to cross about two miles of ground favourable to the Boers, and on which one might reasonably expect a severe attack, seeing the large numbers of fresh men that had joined the Boers towards nightfall. Actually a rather dazed mounted infantryman rode into our position just before dusk to say that three hundred Boers were drawn up between us and the river; and though it was a lie, it might perfectly have been truth, if the Boers had not been disheartened by their fruitless attack and heavy losses. But the young soldiers moved just as steadily, in as good order, and as attentive to every word of command as if on parade—and I could hardly have imagined that a night movement, even on parade, could have been carried out in such perfect order.

All accounts that I receive agree in stating that the Boers still look on the Lang's Nek as their real battle-ground, and that if that is forced there will not be much serious resistance afterwards. They also say that Joubert is much opposed to this advance into Natal, which has been made against his judgment, and wished them to reserve their strength for another battle on the Nek. I imagine, however, that their "Field Commandant General" Smidt, who is their leader in action, is more of a guerilla leader, and does not place so much faith in the large masses of unwilling men whom they get together at their

camps, as in the more determined and adventurous ones whom he takes on these expeditions.

Mr. Ritchie, our chaplain, who signalized himself by his attention to the wounded, and was conducted to the Boer head-quarters, was very favourably impressed by the appearance and intelligence of some of their fighting leaders, but formed a very low opinion of the rank and file, who (are) very roughly used by their leaders, the horsewhip being freely applied. I am glad to think we have done all we can to humanize this most unsatisfactory war ; my offer of medical assistance was most gratefully replied to, though not accepted for the present. There has been no case of firing on flags of truce, and our vedettes often meet and chat on friendly terms, and all arrangements regarding wounded, etc., are at once and satisfactorily made. There was one case of stopping ambulance waggons, but the Boers who did it were drunk. At the same time, they are the most arrant thieves ; even while recognizing the sacredness of the doctor's office, they will pilfer his horse, his saddle, his instruments, anything they can lay their hands upon unperceived, though they will disgorge if discovered. Their anxiety to conceal their own losses is almost comical. At the Lang's Nek a man came up to one of our doctors and asked him for a bit of sticking-plaster for his friend who had cut his finger. The doctor gave it him at once, and asked if he could not give him anything else—lint, etc. The man accepted, though he stuck to it that his friend, whom he seemed really distressed about, had only cut his finger ; but at last, after much beating about, it came out that he was badly shot through the head.

Now that the reinforcements are so near, I hope I may soon be able to report more satisfactory progress, and meanwhile I can only thank you most heartily and gratefully for all the support and assistance you have given me.

The health and spirits of the troops remain excellent. Exclusive of wounded, we have not *one* per cent. sick of this column. And the men are enjoying themselves at games, etc., and only anxious for another trial of strength on more even terms.

Meanwhile, Sir George Colley had been in daily correspondence with the Colonial Office as to the policy to be adopted in consequence of a letter he had received from

Kruger, the purport of which was that the Boers had been driven to arms in self-defence ; that the English people would be on their side if the truth about the annexation reached them ; that if the English would withdraw from the Transvaal, they (the Boers) would withdraw from their positions ; that if annexation were upheld, they would fight to the end. On the 16th of February, Lord Kimberley instructed Sir G. Colley to inform Kruger that if the Boers will desist from armed opposition, we shall be ready (with reference to certain proposals for the ultimate government of the Transvaal) to appoint commissioners with extensive powers. "If this proposal is accepted, you are authorized to agree to the suspension of hostilities."

The proposals referred to apparently included a scheme for the division of the Transvaal, for three days later Colley telegraphed—

I would venture most earnestly to deprecate any scheme based on a division of the Transvaal. Pretoria, the real head-quarters of British sentiment and interest, is in Dutch district, while districts on the native border are those where anti-English feeling is strongest. Am strongly convinced that either acceptance of the Boer programme of a republic under British protection, with guarantees practically making it a British province, or maintenance of annexation granting a liberal constitution, offers better chance of settlement, and would recommend the latter.

To this Lord Kimberley replied—

It has never been our intention to commit ourselves finally to any particular scheme until the matter has been discussed on the spot. If commissioners are appointed, they would have power to consider any scheme which might appear to them to offer the means of a permanent friendly settlement.

On the 23rd of February Colley reached the camp at Mount Prospect, and telegraphed that the Boers were actively fortifying Lang's Nek.

*From Sir George Colley.*

MOUNT PROSPECT, February 23, 1881.

I returned to-day from Newcastle with some of the Indian reinforcements and a large convoy, and have left myself little time before the mail ; but I must write a line to thank you for the ready and ample help given me in every possible way, a support which, if operations have unfortunately to be continued, ought to make my task a very easy one. I am especially grateful to you for sending out Sir Evelyn Wood, whom I have just met, and with whom I have been arranging future operations. We are very old friends and comrades. I could not, of course, have asked for an officer senior to myself to serve under me, and I think it is very generous of him to be ready to do so. But there is no one in the whole service I would have so much liked to have with me, and the fact of his being on the spot in case of accidents relieves me of a great anxiety.

The Boers do not seem to have been encouraged by the result of the Ingogo action to undertake another similar action, but they are now very busy fortifying themselves at the nek, and they have apparently some fresh advice, for they are doing so on more of a system than formerly, and are also pushing forward and occupying more advanced ground. I may have to seize some ground which has hitherto been practically unoccupied by either party, lying between the nek and our camp, without waiting for Kruger's reply, for they have become more aggressive towards this camp, and are trying to press in our vedettes, of whom they lately shot one. But I will not, without strong reason, undertake any operation likely to bring on another engagement until Kruger's reply is received.<sup>1</sup>

These fine Indian regiments will make a most valuable addition to my force ; but I doubt if even they, fine soldiers as they are, can fight better than my young soldiers have done on the two late occasions.

Colley waited three more days for the reply from Kruger, which never came, and meanwhile the "strong reason" referred to above must have forcibly presented

<sup>1</sup> This letter elucidates and confirms the account in Sir William Butler's "Life of Colley" (pp. 358-59), which, the biographer has been informed, was written without any knowledge of this document.

itself, for on the 27th, at 9.30 a.m., he telegraphed: "Occupied Majuba mountain last night, overlooking Boer position. Boers firing at us from below;" and at 12.30 p.m. he added: "Boers still firing heavily on hill, but they have broken up their laager and begun to move away." Four hours later Colonel Bond<sup>1</sup> telegraphed from Mount Prospect camp: "About one the firing increased, and at 1.30 it was evident from the camp that a sudden change had occurred in the position of affairs; great confusion was observed on the hill. By 2.30 it was only too clear we had lost the hill, and that our men were retiring under a heavy fire. I have to report, from information I have obtained, that there is no doubt Major-General Sir G. Pomeroy Colley is among the killed."

On the receipt of the news of this disaster, Mr. Childers took every step to enable a successful advance to be made. Troops were despatched from England and Gibraltar; the pick of the regiments from India—the very battalions which had formed part of the Candahar relief force—had already been hurried out from India, and Mr. Childers decided to recommend to her Majesty that the command should be entrusted to Sir Frederick Roberts. The Queen replied: "Entirely approve; had thought of this myself."

But it was not yet to be. The Cabinet did not feel convinced that what had occurred at Majuba justified their breaking off the negotiations they had ordered Sir G. Colley to open with Kruger; and nineteen years were to pass away before the Gordon Highlanders and the King's Royal Rifles were to resume the advance under the supreme command of the same veteran who had led them to victory in Afghanistan.

Lord Kimberley telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Wood to state all he knew as to the day on which the communication

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General William Dunn Bond, C.B.

was sent to the Boers, to whom it was addressed, and to what place, and was the person to whom it was sent known to be competent to reply without reference to others?

“Colley” replied Sir E. Wood “wrote to Kruger on the 21st, addressing to Lang’s Nek. Bok opened the letter, and, writing Heidelberg on 25th, says Kruger is away and cannot answer for four days.” Next day Sir E. Wood added: “Have signed an agreement with Joubert for suspension of hostilities till 14th of March, for the purpose of receiving Kruger’s reply. I hope you approve.” On the 7th of March the reply came—“Her Majesty’s Government approves armistice.”

It is not within the scope of this memoir to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of the decision arrived at by the Government. One may, however, safely assert that had the people in England known more fully at the time the circumstances under which the regiments were ambuscaded in the Transvaal, public opinion would not have permitted such a peace to be made as was then concluded—a peace which most people saw would never be a lasting one. The armistice was extended, the reinforcements were countermanded, and Sir Frederick Roberts, who had by this time reached Cape Town, returned home.

*To his Son, Spencer.*

WAR OFFICE, *March 31, 1881.*

I hear that there is a chance of this meeting you at St. Vincent, so I write a line to say with what mixed feelings we were obliged to recall you all. I know how great a disappointment it must be to Sir F. Roberts and all of you to have to come back without ever reaching Durban, but when the peace was made, and Sir Evelyn Wood had in his charge the negotiations which will last for some time, ending with the Commission, we felt it impossible to supersede him.

Sir Frederick Roberts having returned home, Sir Evelyn Wood was left to carry out the terms of the armistice.

*From Sir Evelyn Wood.*

NEWCASTLE, NATAL, May 31, 1881.

I received late last night your letter of the 28th of April, and about the same time a copy of Lord Kimberley's telegram of yesterday. Sir George Colley had great literary powers, and, moreover, he had something of interest to describe—for nothing can be so interesting to all of us, until the millennium, as the chances of an impending battle. My work has been of a more prosaic nature, and the decision received last evening, to which I have referred, will diminish for a year or so interest on military subjects in South Africa. I write advisedly, "for a year or so," for I am not sanguine as to future peace.

In the Crimea we made an error which the Germans carefully avoided in 1870-71. We constantly employed the Light Division in the most dangerous situations. I believe I am accurate in stating that the Germans never let a corps which had recently been heavily engaged, lead into action. I saw the marked difference in our Light Division on the 18th of June, 1855,<sup>1</sup> from the dash they showed on the 20th of September, 1854.<sup>2</sup> Had I been permitted to fight the last week in March, I had determined to let a corps of comparatively young soldiers lead; the battalion was last engaged in 1858. We need not disturb ourselves about the cry that the British soldier has deteriorated. Given the same condition in all respects, the men who in their determination to win pushed their unfortunate comrades who were in front on to the revolving sword blades in the Badajos breach, would have behaved just as the detachments of sailors—58th and 92nd—did on the 27th of February.

The dispiriting effect of the Majuba affair on our officers and men at Camp Prospect lasted for some time; but we should have undoubtedly taken the nek about the end of March; and I think such a victory would have been a gain to all—English, Dutch, Kaffirs, and to humanity generally; and that it would have been cheaply purchased even had you lost your generals, and a large number of troops. I must confess I am disappointed at the criticisms on my duty, in England.

It is assumed by many that a general in command

<sup>1</sup> The attack on the Redan.

<sup>2</sup> The battle of the Alma.

of troops should disregard the orders of the responsible advisers of the Crown, if such orders are distasteful to him and to the troops.

It has been said, "He thought more of the wishes of the Ministry than of the feeling of the nation!" "He must be a Liberal like the rest of his family,"<sup>1</sup> and he therefore obeyed orders which he would have otherwise evaded!"

It may be well to record in the War Office that when you send your next expedition to this country, all the cavalry and artillery should come from India. English horses require at least three months of easy work after the long sea voyage.

*To Sir Evelyn Wood.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS, July 21, 1881.

I had intended to acknowledge sooner your private letter of the 31st of May; but from heavy press of business I missed the last mail. I quite understand how different you find, for letter writing, the uninteresting time since the preliminaries of peace were settled, from the more stirring times of war. But, so far as anxious work is concerned, you must be fully occupied, and we find in your telegrams, and later in your despatches, that you have allowed nothing to pass you. Personally, I feel much obliged to you for the way in which you have kept us fully informed. Of course your more interesting communications go first to Lord Kimberley. I do not think you need be in the least unhappy about newspaper criticisms. Every one knows that you are guided by instructions from home, which the telegraph makes more detailed than ever; and even our advanced Irishmen in the House of Commons have only mentioned your name as one of the best possible members of the new Land Commission. I have really nothing to tell you, but I did not like to leave your letter longer unnoticed. You will hear next Tuesday the result of our South African debate, in which I may have to speak.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of them was Lord Hatherley, the Liberal Lord Chancellor in 1868-72.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Michael Hicks Beach's Vote of Censure, defeated by 314 to 205.

*From Sir Evelyn Wood.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TRANSVAAL,  
SOUTH AFRICA, July 14, 1881.

Your attention has doubtless been directed of late to the musketry instruction question. We must bear in mind that two out of the three actions fought, Lang's Nek and the Majuba, were won and lost by causes irrespective of accurate shooting. We cannot quite truly declare that the Ingogo was a drawn affair, as the Boers succeeded in their object, and we failed to a certain extent; but both sides drew off, the Boers before sunset, our people after dark. Our loss was caused by a few brave marksmen having come within three hundred yards of our men. The majority of the Boers shot badly at a thousand yards. Lang's Nek action was lost by the tactical error of attacking a re-entering angle, without having secured the salient angle, which was, moreover, in this case the decisive point. I have so recently referred at length to the Majuba affair that I need not trouble you with any reflections on it.

I hope you will encourage shooting, especially at moving objects; but you should remember that of the seven thousand Boers in arms there were only a small number that can shoot well. A Boer, named Erasmus, who was talking to General Buller<sup>1</sup> last week, spoke with great contempt of the Free State Boers. "Great girls, they can't shoot." Buller questioned him about his own shooting, which is known to be accurate, and he observed: "To hit moving objects requires constant practice. When I have not shot for a month or two I hit nothing."

When I reflect on the stoical manner in which we English received news of disasters—as the loss of H.M.S. *Tiger* in the 14th of November storm, and the quiet way in which we talked of the Alma, that evening, the 20th of September, or of Balaklava that afternoon, the 25th of October—I am convinced that our character has undergone some change: I believe from increasing continental intercourse. We have reason to be proud of our men at Lang's Nek and the Ingogo—to be ashamed of their conduct at the Majuba; but, after all, there were 359 all told, badly handled, and if there were but few wounded at first, you must remember every wounded man was brought into the centre of the position, where he was seen

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Redvers Buller.

by all hands. The hysterical complaints about our men and officers are more like French character than what English used to be; and as the bulk of the Majuba troops were old soldiers, it is useless to argue on short or long service from this illustration.

Whatever conclusion you may come to about troops in South-east Africa, I gather from a note from Lord Kimberley to Sir Hercules Robinson that you intend to retain two battalions at Cape Town. I desire to urge on your attention that the 94th were surprised at Bronkhorst Spruit from having no mounted men. I advocated (not officially on paper) before I left this country, in 1879, that in every battalion there should be some mounted men to act as scouts. I shall shortly submit to H.R.H. a scheme for maintaining in peace time about twenty-five horses per battalion, and to instruct a succession of young soldiers in each company—say for four months—to ride sufficiently well to act as scouts.

P.S.—It may interest you to know that the Boers shot very badly occasionally. At Swart Kopje our men advanced over open ground from twelve hundred to two hundred and twenty yards without loss. Nine men fired at Colonel Gildea and his orderly, who was carrying a white flag to accept the surrender of the Boers, who had hoisted a white flag. The colonel was two hundred and twenty yards distant, the orderly fifty-five yards; yet both escaped.

*To Sir Evelyn Wood.*

WAR OFFICE, October 13, 1881.

I read with great care the remarkable evidence you had collected about poor Colonel Anstruther's misfortune and its causes. I am afraid that we are risking a repetition of what contributed so much to the ruin of the Roman Empire, to say nothing of the Second French Empire—the interference of our power of moving and striking swiftly by the excess of *impedimenta*. It is a warning which will not, I hope, be lost sight of by us: I have talked over several of your suggestions about mounted infantry, meal hours, etc., with H.R.H., and they will be more formally discussed when we are permanently here next month. I hope you will feel that you are receiving every possible support at this crisis which, however, I trust will be satisfactorily over before this reaches you. I was anxious to make quite sure in good time, and

while you had leisure, what would be your wants should matters take the worst form, and your replies will enable us to send out what you may want—men, horses, and material—with the least possible delay; but I cannot believe that the younger Boers will be guilty of the madness of challenging England in a cause in which all the world will pronounce against them.

*From Sir Evelyn Wood.*

S.S. "ROME," IN THE RED SEA, *January 28, 1882.*

I have written to Lord Kimberley this morning my impressions of what I saw on the Portuguese coast, and I think you may like to learn something of the Portuguese troops there. Stationed between Delagoa Bay and Mozambique—and Tette in the interior there are some eight hundred to one thousand blacks. The system for raising these warriors is simple. When Mozambique, or any other place, is fairly full of "loafers" a raid on them is made, and they are shipped off to another station as soldiers! No local enlistments are made—for instance, all the men at Lorenzo Marquez are brought from the Zambesi, or other rivers, but even this does not entirely check desertion. When the garrisons were changed last month by the ship in which I travelled, the reliefs were not allowed to speak with the out-going garrisons, who had only two hours' notice given of their move.

The officers have nearly all got a "touch of the tar brush," and are about as bad specimens of humanity as can be seen, and have, it is believed, all the worst characteristics of the Arab races.

This last word brings me to Zanzibar, where we saw an excellent battalion, 720 strong, drilled on a parade ground of sixty by thirty-five yards. They move and drill with extraordinary precision by English words of command, having been instructed by two ex-naval men. The only unusual movement practised is in marking time, when the men break from quick into half time, and sway the body from side to side as if balancing on board a ship rolling in a sea-way. The whole battalion numbers 1470, so Aldershot is not the only place which has a paper and an effective strength! Two-thirds of the battalion are Suahili or locals, the one-third being made up of different races. All the men feed and house themselves in garrison, free men getting four and a half, slaves two and a half dollars

a month. They can't shoot well over one hundred yards, although they have Sniders, but have made some long marches in very short time, being then rationed on rice and dried shark, which is carried by a coolie corps. Being at Aden for a couple of days, I went over the works, which are constructed so far as they go in a way which made me think of a French maid's description of a General I once served as aide-de-camp—"Mais Monsieur le Général agit en prince." It is over-fortified on the north and east side, guns being perched on the summits of rocks already by nature far too high for effective shooting, and rendered worse by enormous superstructures of masonry. When I remember our satisfaction at seeing the Malakoff Tower crumble under our fire from the twenty-one gun battery I realize the waste of money. I have come to the end of my thick paper, and have too much respect for my superior's eyes to write on Indian paper, but if the subject interests you I will go into details on my return to England.

*To H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge.*

CROMLEX, DUNBLANE, N.B., September 14, 1881.

I return to you, with many thanks, Sir E. Wood's letter<sup>1</sup> about the attack on the 94th. I agree with you, sir, that he does not conclusively refute the charge of treachery; but I fear that his letter discloses a very unsatisfactory state of things as to the *impedimenta*, as the Romans truly called them, of the regiment; and the observance of instructions for a movement in a hostile country.

Autumn manœuvres, as it appears to me, would be useful; but I should have thought that operations on a much smaller scale should be employed, and should familiarize officers with the work at manœuvres on a large scale, in which they could not take part except rarely in their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Relating to Colonel Anstruther's reverse.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ARMY ORGANIZATION.

1880-82.

Introduction of the Territorial System—"The Horse Guards"—Sir Garnet Wolseley becomes Adjutant-General—Sir Frederick Roberts offered the Quartermaster-Generalship—His views on Army Reform—He advocates "khaki."

MR. CHILDERS had taken up the reins at the War Office at a critical period in the history of Army administration.

In 1871 Mr. Cardwell had introduced the system by which all infantry recruits were enlisted for "short service;" in 1874 three-fourths were enlisted for "short service" and one-fourth for "long service." In 1878 it was found difficult to obtain the required proportion for "long service," and practically all were enlisted for "short service." By "long service" was meant twelve years with the colours; by "short service" was meant six years with the colours and six with the reserve; an additional year could be required from men serving abroad.

In 1872-73 Mr. Cardwell had proposed what is known as the "Localization Scheme." Under this plan two regiments were associated ("linked" as it was called) for purposes of mutual support, interchanging men and also officers. Two militia battalions were to be affiliated to them, and the whole formed into one brigade, having its head-quarters at the Brigade Depôt, commanded by a full colonel, where the recruiting was to be carried on, and

from which the auxiliary and reserve forces were to be supervised.

In 1877 a powerful committee, presided over by Mr. Childers's predecessor, Colonel Stanley (the present Lord Derby), recommended that these four battalions (two line and two militia) should be formed into a territorial regiment, both officers and men wearing the same uniform respectively, the militia to be the third and fourth battalions.

During the last three or four years of Lord Beaconsfield's administration, a reaction had set in against this new system, and in 1879 a committee of officers, under the presidency of Lord Airey,<sup>1</sup> had been assembled to inquire into certain defects which had been found to exist in the working of short service, and in the arrangements made under the localization scheme. The committee were instructed that there was "no intention on the part of the Government to depart from the general principles of re-organization which had been accepted by the country since 1870," and the "formation of the army in regiments of more than one battalion for the purposes of mutual support" was expressly stated to be one of those general principles ; but, notwithstanding this instruction, the committee felt justified in re-opening the general question of linked battalions.

The report of Lord Airey's Committee was only printed a few days before the dissolution in the spring of 1880, and Colonel Stanley had not recorded any opinion upon it beyond saying that it proposed to "unlink" battalions and establish depots, to extend colour service, and to improve the position of the non-commissioned officers (sergeant-majors, sergeants, corporals, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> Formerly General Sir Richard Airey ; he had been Quarter-Master-General, 1855-65 ; Adjutant-General, 1870-76. He died in Lord Wolseley's house at Leatherhead, 1881.

The chief recommendation, namely, to unlink battalions, as a method of remedying defects found to exist in the "short service" system, was, in Mr. Childers's opinion, of such a reactionary nature that he resolved that, if Mr. Cardwell's system were to be maintained, it must be carried out in its entirety, and to that end he saw no better means than the formation of Territorial Regiments.

Many recommendations were made to him, and among others, Mr. (now Sir Arthur) Otway had suggested the plan, often put forward at various times, of separating the army into regiments for home and foreign service.

*To Mr. Otway, M.P.*

*December 31, 1880.*

Thank you for your note, and the suggestions which it contains. I hope to make it clear that I shall do all in my power to retain the old regimental distinctions, badges, etc., which contribute towards maintaining *esprit de corps*. This is quite consistent with the localization plan started by Cardwell, and so strongly advocated by Stanley, and by such soldiers as Wolseley, MacDougall, and others. As to your other suggestion, the objection to it is that it practically restores an Indian or perhaps an Indian *plus* Colonial army. We have the same number of battalions serving at home and abroad. If half the army were recruited for the former, and half for the latter service, the Indian and Colonial regiments could never be at home, and we should revert to the objectionable system which the Mutiny compelled us to discontinue, with the additional evil that we should not have in India the old Queen's troops which took their turn of service at home. Besides, your plan involves, if I understand it, conscription for the home service, for which I doubt the country being ripe. We pay now *no* bounty. Thanks for your kind congratulations of the season, which we reciprocate.

Besides his own colleagues, he consulted his old friend, Lord Halifax, and sent a copy of Lord Airey's Committee

Report to Lord Ripon (a former War Secretary). The acknowledgment by the latter is interesting, as touching upon an incident, much discussed at the time, in the life of General Gordon.

*From the Marquis of Ripon.*

SIMLA, July 5, 1880.

Many thanks for sending me the report of Airey's Committee, which arrived safely by the last mail, and which I shall examine with interest, though not probably, from your description, with much admiration.

There is no secret history connected with Colonel Gordon's resignation. We parted the best of friends ; he simply found on reflection that the position of a private secretary would *not* suit him, and I think he was right. My respect for him has in many ways increased rather than diminished. Clarke will tell you all about him.

*From Sir Andrew Clarke.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MALABAR POINT, BOMBAY,  
June 1, 1880.

We landed yesterday, the functions well done by Sir James Fergusson,<sup>1</sup> and the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, well received. . . . You will have been sorry to hear that Charlie Gordon has resigned the private secretaryship, and returns to Egypt. He really never fancied the post, but going through Egypt finished him, and up till yesterday it has been one constant struggle with him on my part to get him to continue till some opportunity might occur here in Asia, or elsewhere, to give him more congenial work, and at half-past one yesterday I had left him with this impression ; fancy, then, my astonishment, just as we were going in to dinner, at his coming up to me and telling me he had done it, that he had written to Lord Ripon, sending in his resignation.

Lord Ripon sent for me after dinner, and we considered the matter. Beyond the first appointment of Gordon, Lord Ripon is wholly blameless in the matter. Gordon

<sup>1</sup> Then Governor of Bombay ; now M.P. for North-East Manchester.

is not an ordinary man, and his mind and actions are not regulated in the same way as are other men's minds. He frets and chafes not only at what he thinks the finesse and lies of ordinary public life, but at its ceremony and its etiquette ; a state dinner, or even to wait through an ordinary social gathering is irritating and annoying to him.

However, there is, as Lord Ripon said, no use now crying over spilt milk. The whole thing is to be regretted. Gordon is not to hold or to bind, and perhaps, on the whole, it is better that the rupture should come now, and not later on, when Ripon has begun his work, and is developing his policy.

In May, 1880, Sir John Adye joined the Government as Surveyor-General of the Ordnance ; and in the following note Mr. Childers records his first meeting with Sir Garnet Wolseley, who had just returned from concluding the war in South Africa, and had been appointed Quarter-master-General to the Forces.

*June 26, 1880.*—Saw Sir Garnet Wolseley. He said he hoped to assist me in many army reforms in which he had been interested. Spoke to him about flogging, and the compromise of last year, which he did not like. He said he expected to take up his office at once, and to have his leave later. I told him that his coming at the end of June had been arranged before I was Secretary of State.

*August 30, 1880.*—Long interview with Sir Garnet Wolseley. He strongly adheres to the present six years' short service ; but thinks men going to India should re-engage by some method for eight years there. He highly approves a second optional reserve time after the twelve years' service. He approves in every detail the plan about non-commissioned officers. He would adhere boldly to Colonel Stanley's localization scheme, if possible, attaching the reserve men to the militia, and having the same uniform for all battalions of one brigade or regiment. He is disposed to abandon flogging, and will look up substitutes. He approves the Navy system for promotion and retirement ; all promotion to Lieut.-Colonel and above to be by selection absolutely.

Throughout the autumn Mr. Childers worked hard at the problems before him, and from time to time submitted to her Majesty proposals which he considered necessary to remedy various defects which time had shown to exist in the details of Lord Cardwell's system.

*From the Queen.*

BALMORAL CASTLE, November, 1880.

On reading over the memorandum sent to her by Mr. Childers, the Queen thinks it right to make the following remarks on the questions under discussion. The addition of one year to the term of an infantry soldier's service with the colours is a gain; but is it necessary to reduce the cavalry soldier's service for no other purpose than to assimilate his term with that of the foot soldier's?

The Queen cannot deny that she much regrets it has not been thought advisable to unlink battalions. The regimental system has always proved itself to be the best under very trying circumstances, and the Queen hesitates to adopt a new organization which must weaken the *esprit de corps* of most of the existing regiments.

The Queen trusts that the new names will be purely territorial, and that the proposed formations will not adopt the numerals which have become hallowed in the Army.

The Queen was glad to hear from Mr. Childers that he would do nothing to injure the feelings of officers and men who have so worthy a pride in the historic glories of their corps, and she understood he intended to appoint a committee to inquire into this subject. The Queen would like to hear the names of the officers selected for this purpose.

Whenever the suggestions respecting the retirement of officers come under discussion, the Queen trusts that existing interests will be cared for.

The Queen fears that promotion by selection will be very difficult. It will, of course, be very desirable to retain the services of non-commissioned officers. The Queen is not sure how far the granting of the rank of warrant officers will effect the object desired.

The Queen has much confidence in Mr. Childers's

judgment on these matters, and would be glad to hear from him occasionally as matters proceed.

He will, of course, come to no decision without first submitting the plan, when completed, to the Queen.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE, November 20, 1880.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, thanks your Majesty for graciously replying so fully to his letter of the 14th inst., which explained the heads of the Army questions under discussion. Mr. Childers desires to assure your Majesty of his extreme anxiety to maintain, to the fullest possible extent, the *esprit de corps* and traditions of the Army, and he attaches full value to its regimental organization. Recognizing that the system of short service has been deliberately adopted, and could not be reversed, Mr. Childers is anxious to bring it into more perfect harmony with the past work required of the Army, namely, that half its infantry strength should be employed in holding India, and some of your Majesty's possessions abroad. It is with this object that Mr. Childers proposes to extend the infantry soldier's service with the colours from six to seven years at home, and even to eight years if he is on foreign service. For the same reason he proposes to raise the age below which recruits would not be taken, and to provide that no soldier shall embark for India until he has passed through a longer period of probation. Although it was thought admissible in the first instance that the cavalry or artillery soldier's service with the colours should be longer than the six years established for the infantry, there appears to be no objection to the two periods being the same, if fixed at seven years. Sir Charles Ellice<sup>1</sup> will be the chairman of the committee to whom the duty will be assigned of working at the details of amalgamating two battalions of the line and two of militia in one territorial regiment. Mr. Childers does not propose that the new regiments should be numbered. The grant of the rank of warrant officer to one or two non-commissioned officers in each regiment is only one of several honours proposed to be conferred on this important class. Mr. Childers will spare no pains to see that due provision is made for vested

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Charles Hay Ellice, G.C.B., at that time Adjutant-General.

interests, in settling the basis of retirement for the several ranks of officers ; and he has impressed the great importance of this on all those who are employed in preparing the plan for ultimate decision. Mr. Childers is most grateful to your Majesty for your gracious expression of confidence in his judgment in the important, but most difficult duty, which has fallen to him. He will take advantage of your Majesty's permission that he should write to your Majesty from time to time as the different branches of his plan are matured. Mr. Childers will report to your Majesty the names of the other officers proposed to be associated with Sir C. Ellice.

*To the Queen.*

CANTLEY, December 23, 1880.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, desires to assure your Majesty that he will act strictly on the undertaking which he gave at Balmoral in November, and, while carrying out the changes in army organization which are the necessary consequence of the system of "linking," will do all in his power to retain designations and numbers to which regiments are attached—the battalion number of the line.

Accordingly, towards the end of 1880 the committee, under the presidency of Sir Charles Ellice, assembled to determine the designations which the regiments should adopt, and whether it was desirable to re-adjust the combinations of the existing linked battalions ; also to settle the records of service on the colours, and the arrangements for uniformity of clothing. The proposals of this committee were generally adopted ; and it was their recommendations which formed the basis on which the territorial regiments are now organized.

Naturally, the news of the far-reaching changes in contemplation was not received in so highly conservative a body as the Army without deep murmuring and loud protest ; and in some influential quarters with great and powerful opposition.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

GLoucester House, Park Lane, W., November 21, 1880.

I was in hopes to have been able to hand you the accompanying return on Friday, but I unfortunately did not see you again after the Cabinet. It speaks for itself. All the regiments that distinguished themselves in Afghanistan were regiments composed of *old soldiers*, and the young drafts, I hear from Sir Frederick Roberts, General Macpherson, and, indeed, from all the generals, were the only ones who really broke down. This is the best reply to the notion which exists in some minds, that young soldiers are better than seasoned men. Roberts says that his best men are those of four to twelve years' service.

I hope, however, when I see you, to discuss this matter with you more fully. Meanwhile I cannot tell you how much I am distressed to find myself so strongly at variance with some of the decisions which I gathered from our last conversation you had come to. We are working so pleasantly and cordially together, that to me it is most disagreeable to appear to differ from your views. And yet I am bound to stand up for the very strong opinion I entertain from the experiences we have gathered from recent events. My contention is that we must have more efficient battalions at home than we have, nay, that we cannot go on with a double-battalion system without a complete destruction of the Home Army, and that the building up of individual regiments, with their valuable *esprit de corps*, will only land us in a state of things as regards our infantry which is wholly indefensible on military grounds, and which can never meet the demands and requirements that are made upon the services of the Army.

I will endeavour with my Staff Officers to put forward some alternative scheme, which I think practicable and possible, and I am sure, with your usual great consideration for me, you will give it your most favourable consideration. *I know your great difficulties*; I certainly do not wish to increase them, but, at the same time, I cannot give you military advice which I think is unsound and impracticable, and to this you must ascribe my dissent in this respect.

The Commander-in-Chief accordingly submitted a memorandum, in which he very candidly set forth his views on the subject; but he added, "Should it appear, however,

that for reasons of State policy it is necessary that the contemplated changes should be made, I am prepared to carry them out to the best of my ability, and to do all that I can to mitigate the pain they will cause in very many distinguished regiments, as well as in the Army generally."

To this Mr. Childers replied :—

*To H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

*December 14, 1880.*

I received yesterday evening the box containing Your Royal Highness's private note to me, and also the two memoranda in which you so strongly urge the unlinking of line regiments. I hope to see you, Sir, at twelve to-day; but, meanwhile, I desire to assure you with what extreme reluctance, and, indeed, pain I ever differ from any recommendation about the Army which you, Sir, make, and how anxious I always am to concede any point which does not appear to me inconsistent with an adopted principle. I sincerely thank you, Sir, for the assurance, so thoroughly in harmony with the kindness and consideration you have always shown to me, that Your Royal Highness will do all in your power to carry out changes, although they may not meet with your concurrence.

You will find, Sir, that I am most desirous to reciprocate this feeling, and to give the most loyal support in my power to Your Royal Highness in the administration of the Army.

Mr. Childers forwarded the memorandum of the Duke of Cambridge to the Prime Minister, who replied that, in spite of the great ability with which the case had been stated, he maintained that the new system was calculated to increase, and not diminish, the harmony and *esprit de corps* among the men.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, *May 4, 1881.*

The Queen has been informed that you and the military authorities would prefer to call the new territorial regiments

by numbers instead of county titles, but do not like to propose this, believing that the Queen objects.

Her Majesty commands me to let you know that she objected to the numbers, especially well-honoured numerical names, being transferred to other regiments, but her Majesty has no objection to the numbering of the territorial regiments where the connection with the old numeral can be maintained.

In a proposal forwarded by the Duke of Cambridge this was partially done. The first twenty-five regiments could remain as they now are, and the remainder could take the number of the senior battalion.

The Queen hopes this may be done, as it will greatly simplify the naming of the regiments.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE May 19, 1881.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to submit for your Majesty's approval the arrangements as to the designations of the territorial regiments, which he has endeavoured to make strictly consonant with the wishes expressed by your Majesty, and the understanding explained by Mr. Childers at audiences with which your Majesty has honoured him. He has been careful on the one hand to comply with your Majesty's desire, as expressed to him on the 15th of November, that the new names should be purely territorial, the proposed formations not adopting the numerals which have been hallowed in the Army; and, on the other hand, to the utmost degree practicable, to retain the old traditions connected with the numbering of the regiments, and also to indicate clearly to what regiment and battalion each man belongs. With these views he has had the honour from time to time to explain to your Majesty the proposals discussed at the War Office, which he now submits in a complete form.

In the Army List the district of each territorial regiment will be numbered in the order of precedence of regiments, which will follow that of their senior battalion. The districts of the first twenty-five regiments will thus have consecutive numbers, but after the 35th a number will occasionally drop out; as was the case in the numbering of the Navy in former Navy Lists. But throughout, the

numbering of the senior battalion will be that of the district. The former numbers of each battalion will be printed after the words "first battalion" or "second battalion." The territorial designation of the regiment will be marked in a simple and visible form on the shoulder-straps of the men, with the number of the battalion and the grenade or bugle or other badge. There will thus be no difficulty in seeing at a glance to what regiment and battalion each man belongs.

The new arrangements were explained to the House of Commons in a speech introducing the Army Estimates on the 3rd of March, 1881.

Besides the introduction of the territorial system, Mr. Childers's proposals included the readjustment of the period of service: instead of six years with the colours, and six with the reserve, this was now to be seven years and five years respectively—

The term we have proposed, he said in his speech, was formerly recommended, among soldiers by Sir Charles Napier, and among civilians by Mr. Godley, and it will, I believe, both supply us with sufficient recruits and, with further provisions, steadily build up a reserve.

The minimum age for recruiting was to be raised from eighteen to nineteen, and no soldier was, under any circumstances, to go to India under twenty. The position of non-commissioned officers was to be improved by the creation of warrant rank, by allowing all corporals to remain in the service for twelve years or to re-engage for twenty-one, with the consent of their commanding officers, and all sergeants for twenty-one years, unless specially refused by the Commander-in-Chief. The principle of selection for lieut.-colonel's appointments was to be introduced (a reform earnestly desired by Mr. Cardwell as recommended by the Duke of Somerset's Committee of 1857). A large reduction was to be made in the list of general officers; and, lastly, a punishment in the nature

of restraint, not affecting life or limb, was to be substituted for flogging.

With regard to the territorial system, Mr. Childers declared :—

We cannot leave things as they are: we must either complete the union in a territorial regiment of the four battalions (two of the line and two of militia) or, according to every opponent of the system, undo our whole policy as to a territorial army, and convert the dépôt centre barracks, for which Parliament voted three millions and a half, into something else.

With regard to flogging he added :—

I am very conscious of the reluctance with which, step by step, the majority of officers have seen corporal punishment disappearing from the Statute Book; but without re-opening now this old controversy, I think I may safely say that the compromise of 1879, which limited this punishment to the case of offences punishable by death, was the doom of flogging; and I trust that the greater popularity of the Army, and the consequent improvement in recruiting, which I do not hesitate to predict as the result of this final step, will reconcile to it many of those who, before 1879, reluctantly clung to corporal punishment as a necessity.

*From the Right Hon. William Adam, Governor of Madras.<sup>1</sup>*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MADRAS, March 28, 1881.

. . . We have just received your speech on moving the Army Estimates. I have not yet had time to read it carefully, but I find general approval of it all over the military service here. I have just returned from Mysore and Bangalore, having been to represent Ripon at the installation of the Maharajah. The provincial Commander-in-Chief, General Payn, was with me. He and all his staff are pleased. I rather deprecate the idea of abolishing the commands-in-chief at Madras and Bombay, as I fear it may lead to what I think would be a most unwise and

<sup>1</sup> He had formerly been Liberal Whip, and in control of the electioneering arrangements of 1880; M.P. for Clackmannan and Kinross, 1859-80; twice First Commissioner for Works. Died in India, 1881.

hazardous and uncalled-for policy, viz., the amalgamation of the three armies of India. We can go on very well as we are here, till you great folks at home have made up your minds what you mean eventually to do with our commands. General Payn is a good officer, and we are peaceable people in Madras ; but I think, for all that can be saved by abolishing the commands, it is hardly worth while to make an innovation which will be very unsatisfactory and unpopular to the armies of Madras and Bombay, which will deprive the Governments of these Presidencies of a valuable military counsellor, and which will enable an innovating Commander-in-Chief in India easily to amalgamate the three armies. All that I beg is that nothing of the sort may be done without consulting Madras and Bombay officers, and that too much weight shall not be given to the advice either of the *Supreme Government* or Queen's and Bengal officers. Ask Sir Neville Chamberlain, who knows intimately all the *three* armies. I have already written in this sense to Hartington, and I repeat it to you.

I am so glad you stuck to your guns about Candahar. I was quite certain you would have a good majority in the Commons, but I did not expect one so good as it was.<sup>1</sup> Although the forward policy has many partisans, I was surprised to find that all the best and most reliable men *here* were dead against it, headed by Sir Neville<sup>2</sup> and all my Council, and most of the secretaries. I told Hartington<sup>3</sup> that he should set up Sir Neville's authority against Lord Napier of Magdala, or any other soldier in India. No one has had more experience. They have made so much of Lord Napier that I think you ought to have a distinguished general set up against him. I dare say, however, the question looms larger out here than it does at home, and that the spurt in the Lords and public meetings is the last flicker of expiring jingoism, and the country is as sound as it was when I left. Tell R. Grosvenor,<sup>4</sup> with my salaam, that I think he brought his men up capitally for that division.

<sup>1</sup> On the retention of Candahar debate, the Government were beaten in the Lords by 165 to 76, Lord Beaconsfield making his last speech. In the Commons their majority was 120.

<sup>2</sup> Now Field-Marshal Sir N. Chamberlain ; then Commander-in-Chief in Madras. He served in the first Afghan War, 1839-42.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary of State for India, 1880-82.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Richard Grosvenor, Liberal Whip ; now Lord Stalbridge.

I have had a most interesting week at Mysore, installing the Maharajah ; the sight was curious and grand. I had to go up in considerable state ; and to show you how we burnt the Queen's powder in salutes, etc., I may mention that from leaving Madras, till I returned, I had 349 guns fired in salutes for myself alone. This seems rather ridiculous, but I could not get off with less.

I have not envied you in the House of Commons, and think that both in weather and politics I have had the best of it.

*To Sir Robert Anstruther, Bart., M.P.<sup>1</sup>*

1881.

It is a great pleasure to me to know that you like generally my Army proposals. They look like compromises ; but the *via media* often contains solid truth, and each proposal stands on its own bottom. The length of service especially was not intended as a half-way house between six years and long service, but was the result of independent inquiry as to what would suit India, and, at the same time, give us a reserve sufficiently quickly. I am quite with you about volunteering from other regiments, and we have sent out this large force to Natal, in spite of Irish requirements, without calling for a man from other than the linked battalions. I shall be glad, indeed, when that word "linked" disappears, and I think we have made the changes in the present linking which will ensure the two battalions of the new regiments coming together comfortably. At any rate, the *words* as to selection go as far as any one would wish. The thing itself must, after all, greatly depend on whoever has the power.

The House is a terrible bear garden ; but the Radicals have behaved well, as have all the Tories, except Lord Randolph Churchill and two or three more.

*From Sir Edmund Du Cane.<sup>2</sup>*

COOMBE SPRINGS, Nr. KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, March 4, 1881.

I write, not to trouble you with suggestions, but to congratulate you very heartily on your statement, which

<sup>1</sup> Of Balcaskie, Lord Lieutenant of Fife ; died, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Chairman of Directors and Inspector General of Military Prisons.

I have heard spoken of with nothing but satisfaction, and, for myself, I must say that it seems to me to propose a great number of very promising solutions of very difficult questions. I don't think Lord Cardwell's scheme has ever had fair play, for it had bad people to carry it out, who were interested in or behind it, and it has been criticized by the light of the defects inevitable in a period of transition.

No doubt, however, it had its defects; but as a piece of testimony which is very *genuine*, you may like to know that competent observers, with no particular prejudice, have observed to me that the soldiers who have come into Millbank as prisoners lately (after a cessation of about a year from receiving soldier prisoners there) are in a marked degree better than the old lot, which looks as if the class of men who enlist is becoming better.

*From Sir Harry Verney, M.P.<sup>1</sup>*

MARKWARD HOTEL, STUTTGART, October 16, 1880.

I believe that there are few, even among your colleagues, who feel more earnest anxiety, and, I must add, expectation, of your success in your very arduous department than I do. Improvement is required, I believe, in every branch of the service, to make it as efficient as it may be made by good training and instruction and encouragement to the most deserving, without adding to its expense. If every branch requires improvement, most especially does the staff. The staff of the army ought to consist of none but efficient officers, fit for any service. I passed the greater part of two days in the Ober Stab Amt at Berlin a few years since, and then went to Spandau with Hope Grant, and my days with Moltke left a strong impression with me of the perfection of his system of training. As far as I can recollect, when a young officer shows ability in infantry, cavalry, or artillery, he is sent to Moltke, who, if he approves of the candidate after a certain trial, sends him, if an infantry officer, for a certain time—I forget whether a year or six months—to serve with artillery and cavalry; the same with any artillery or cavalry officer; then again to the Ober Stab Amt for instruction in

<sup>1</sup> The veteran M.P. for Buckingham; son of General Sir Harry Calvert, Adjutant-General to the Forces, 1800-1820, and an old ally of Colonel Walbanke Childers in the campaigns in the Low Countries.



*Colonel J. W. Childers*  
*Lt. Col. of the 11<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons 1793 - 1802.*  
*Grandfather of Hugh Childers.*

Walker & Cotes & Co. sc.



military plan-drawing, and field fortification plan-drawing from nature; then sent to make a report on some engineering work. All this took an officer some years, but he was trained a very perfect staff officer, capable of detecting defects in any branch of the service. In the course of his training he was always sent back to his regiment or corps, to keep up his acquaintance with his own arm; and, unless Moltke thought well of him, he was left there.

The German staff is a perfect Intelligence Department. When I was there forty-two officers were there under instruction. How many have we under instruction as staff officers? And we ought to have men possessing knowledge of every country where we may have to carry on war.

Sir Garnet Wolseley had much information as to his march westward of Lake Superior, and his expedition cost less than two millions. Lord Napier knew nothing of the country to Magdala, and his expedition cost, I believe, nine millions. English officers only want encouragement, and our Intelligence Department would be the best in the world. Am I not right in saying that want of good intelligence led to the disaster of Isandula, perhaps also to General Burrows's defeat?

Then officers must not be appointed to high commands who have had no training in inferior ones, and the Secretary of State for War may exercise some control even over the Commander-in-Chief.

Regimental officers generally form a correct opinion of those superior men who are fit to command them, and the Secretary of State may ascertain that fitness and not let favour dictate the choice of commanders. Pardon my long story, my dear Childers.

I am passing a few days here, where, sixty-one years since, Mr. Canning sent me attached to the mission of Sir Brook Taylor, Sir Herbert's brother.

*To Lord Reay.*

*February 9, 1881.*

The tartan question is one of the gravest character, far more important, as your friend suggests, than the maintenance of the Union with Ireland. All the thoughts of the War Office are concentrated on it, and patterns of tartans, past, present, and future, fill our rooms. We are neglecting the Transvaal and Ashanti for the sake of

well weighing the merits of a few more threads of red, green, or white. I cannot but hope that a solution may be found, and that in future Highland officers may not be required to keep double sets of uniform, to be worn according to which of their two regiments they may happen to be attached to. I hear of hideous compromises on the part of junior officers, who dread the increase of tailor's bills. But when they consult me, I advise them not to pay them, and to leave it to the civilian customers of their tailors to make up the deficiency by ten per cent. addition to their bills. But I am told this would be nothing new. How refreshing it is in these prosaic days to find so much sentiment about dress in the male sex!

One of the earliest steps Mr. Childers took—almost immediately on entering upon his duties at the War Office—shows that he had the cause of the Volunteers at heart.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

July 16, 1880.

There is a question of a general character about honours which I should like to submit to your consideration, and that is whether, now that the volunteer force has attained its majority—it was started in 1859, and is beyond question a most valuable addition to our national defences—it would not be well to confer some distinction upon its principal promoters. This would be extremely popular, and to my mind very judicious. It would be a happy sequel to the general order we lately issued congratulating the force in the Queen's name on their efficiency, and stating her wish to review them *en masse* at no distant date. If you entertained the idea, I would go very carefully through the names with H.R.H. and my other advisers. You might perhaps give three K.C.B.'s and six C.B.'s. I think it should be done before the end of the session. I have not spoken to H.R.H. about this, but have reason to know he would like it.

These views met with the Prime Minister's sympathy; the proposals received her Majesty's approval, and were announced by Mr. Childers on bringing in the Army Estimates in 1881.

*From the Earl of Wemyss (then Lord Elcho).*

23, ST. JAMES' PLACE, S.W., May 24, 1881.

I cannot allow this volunteer service reward business to pass without writing you a line to thank you for what you have done for the force, and to congratulate you on having *acted* in this, and other matters, where your predecessors have failed to avail themselves of the opportunity of so doing, which was equally open to them. As to myself, you know how grateful I am for your kindness. I am very much gratified by her Majesty's great favour so graciously conferred upon me, but I am none the less much indebted to you for aiding me in my endeavour to escape the honour I have received.<sup>1</sup>

A minor matter which came under Mr. Childers's notice at this time was the question of the title "Horse Guards," which had continued to be employed in official correspondence to describe the head-quarters of the army, and he wrote to the Commander-in-Chief advocating the abolition of this mode of dating letters.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

KISSINGEN, August 7, 1881.

MY DEAR CHILDERS,—There is a passage in your letter of the 4th inst. which, however unimportant it may appear, fills me with great concern, and has given me great annoyance. It is with reference to your wish that from a given date, October 1st, the present mode of dating letters from the several departments of my office should cease to

<sup>1</sup> With reference to this last sentence, Lord Wemyss has explained to the biographer that when it was proposed that he should be appointed aide-de-camp to the Queen and her Majesty's approval of the proposal had been obtained, he respectfully declined the honour in question, as he was unwilling to accept it for himself, having always advocated the creation of these aide-de-campships. Mr. Childers, however, told Lord Elcho that the Queen commanded him to accept the honour, but that her Majesty would make his appointment a supernumerary one, thus not depriving the force of one of the aide-de-campships to be created.

be from the "Horse Guards," as has hitherto been the case.

I am the first to acknowledge with you that nothing can be more unreserved, and I think satisfactory, than the present relations between yourself as Secretary of State and myself as Commander-in-Chief, but, such being the case happily, and everything as a result working perfectly smoothly in the office, why make any change, and why do that which would certainly be *most distasteful* to myself, and I think anything but popular to the service generally? The *command* of the army rests with the Commander-in-Chief, as representing the Sovereign; the Secretary of State is the high political official who controls all army matters and represents the Department, for which he is fully responsible in Parliament. But he certainly does not command the army. It would be impossible for a civilian to do so, and I don't think you would wish to see a military man take the place, as a rule, which you are now filling as a leading member of the party with which you are associated, and which now holds office. Consequently the command-in-chief cannot be merged in the Secretary of State under present conditions, and my position must have an individuality, which it is essential and necessary to maintain. Letters and orders emanating from me cannot, therefore, be simply dated from the War Office. They must be dated as they now are, with the well-known old style retained, or they must be styled as from Army Head Quarters. But all the sympathies of the service go with the old title of the "*Horse Guards*," to which is added now War Office, to prove that the two offices are under one roof. This was so arranged with Cardwell at the time of the removal of my office to its present location, and I hoped and fully believed that this arrangement would be considered final, and that no further changes would be introduced. I am sure her Majesty thought that also, and she was decidedly a party to the arrangement, and I don't see that a change could be introduced without the subject having been first submitted to her for her approval.

I do hope and trust that, under these circumstances, you will not carry out this change. We have had so many changes of late, and the old landmarks have been so largely swept away, that it is most undesirable to make any more, and believe me that old traditions in army matters are of the *greatest value* to the service generally,

and consequently to the State. A few advanced politicians might be pleased, but certainly not the service, and most assuredly not its present Commander-in-Chief.

I remain, my dear Childers,

Yours most sincerely,

GEORGE.

Finding such unexpected and great importance was attached to the retention of this designation, Mr. Childers, who in all the changes which he had to inaugurate strove to the utmost to be conciliatory, was content to point out the obvious anomaly, without pushing further his own views on a matter of comparatively small moment.

After the Transvaal Armistice Sir Frederick Roberts returned to England, and eventually proceeded to India as Commander-in-Chief of the Madras army. Mr. Childers had hoped to persuade him to remain at home. In the autumn of this year (1881) the office of Adjutant-General to the Forces would fall vacant, and he greatly wished to make arrangements which, while promoting Sir Garnet Wolseley to the office, would have brought Sir Frederick Roberts to the War Office as Quartermaster-General.

In this he was so far successful that he was able to carry through his plan as regarded the Adjutant-Generalship, but to his great regret, Sir Frederick Roberts decided to remain in India.

*To Sir Frederick (now Earl) Roberts.*

December 23, 1881.

You will, I believe, by this mail receive a letter from the Duke of Cambridge, offering to recommend you to me for the appointment of Quartermaster-General at Head Quarters, on the understanding that you need not take up the office until towards the middle of 1882. The Duke is aware, in general terms, of what confidentially passed between us in the month before you left England. I have not seen the words of H.R.H.'s letter, and I

therefore do not know precisely how he puts his proposal before you ; but what I have asked him to express is that your acceptance of the office—"nominally so much less in value than the one you now hold"—should be a matter entirely for your own discretion ; that is to say, that you will not be prejudiced in our eyes if you find it more to your advantage to decline it. At the same time, speaking in *my* interest and that of the public, I may say that I hope you will be able to conclude that it will be for your advantage to come to Head Quarters, and Lord Hartington has told me, in confidence, that he is of the same mind. However, do not let this too much weigh with you. What I hope you will carefully consider is whether, having regard to all the circumstances of your past career, your age, and the high estimation in which you are held, it would be of advantage to you to hold, for five years, the second highest office at Head Quarters under the immediate eye of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Secretary of State, or to remain in a high command in India.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

RANGOON, BRITISH BURMA, February 5, 1882.

Owing to my having been on tour in an out-of-the-way part of Burma, your very kind letter of the 23rd of December last, with one from the Duke of Cambridge of the same date, reached me only a few days ago.

Immediately on arrival at Rangoon I telegraphed as follows to his Royal Highness :—

"I have just received your Royal Highness's and Mr. Childers's letters of the 23rd of December. I am most grateful for offer of appointment at Horse Guards, but I beg I may be allowed to retain my present command."

I trust the delay in my replying will not put you or his Royal Highness to any inconvenience ; I am very sorry for it, especially as I have ventured to refuse the appointment, but communication in Burma is still somewhat primitive, and letters take a long time.

I cannot thank you enough for your letter, and for the very flattering terms in which you express your wish that I should succeed Sir Garnet Wolseley as Quartermaster-General.

The offer is a most tempting one ; I have a great longing to take a part in the administration of the Army

and to be initiated into the working of the War Office ; but, as you are kind enough to give me the option of refusing the appointment, and to tell me that my doing so will not prejudice me in the eyes of the Government, I have come to the conclusion that it would not be prudent for me, at present, to give up my appointment in India.

I have done so with deep regret ; England has many attractions for me, not the least of which would be that of finding myself associated with you in carrying out the interesting work of the Army.

Your kindness, however, makes me hopeful that, at some future time, I may possibly have the great pleasure of serving under you.

On the 19th of January, Mr. Childers, addressing his constituents of Pontefract, explained the steps he had taken in fulfilment of the promises he had made on taking office to develop the efficiency and usefulness of the Army. He said :—

Before I took office, I had had some part in inquiries by Committees about the Army, but I was not aware, until I entered upon my duties at the War Office, of the very large number of pending questions, some of the highest importance, which it would be my duty to solve. I believe I once said in the House of Commons that they amounted to something like ninety in number ; but however that may be, it was very soon evident to me that for two or three years my time, if I held office so long, would be exclusively devoted to them ; and this will partly account to you, gentlemen, for the comparative rarity of my speaking on other subjects since you re-elected me. But I am able to say that, while much still remains to be done, we have made no inconsiderable progress in the work I found before me ; and, as what we have effected up to this time is already bearing good fruit, you may like to know something of it.

The first object at which I aimed was one in which I am happy to say we have been completely successful. I endeavoured to secure the cordial co-operation of all those who, either in or out of Parliament, took an active interest in military affairs and Army efficiency, and I

determined, if possible, to raise the questions which we had to discuss and decide out of the arena of party politics. The opportunity was good, for the great changes effected by Lord Cardwell ten or twelve years ago, however hotly some were contested at the time, had not been materially disturbed, or even disapproved by his successors. As I have said, gentlemen, we have had in this complete success, and the best proof is that in the two or three hundred speeches made by distinguished public men since the beginning of the recess, all of which I believe I have read, (I do not include replies to the toast of the Army), there is only one in which any special reference has been made to Army matters; and that was by my friend Mr. Trevelyan, who, telling the public what had been done for one of the two fighting services, could not refrain from saying a good word for the administration of the other. But while orators have been silent, the press has not been equally so, and I confess that I have been greatly aided, as I always am, by the intelligent criticisms, whether friendly or not, of the great fourth estate. Among those criticisms, however, there is one which, though never recently mentioned in Parliament, deserves, I think, passing notice. It has been suggested that of late years successive Secretaries of State for War have, in the government of the Army, been encroaching on the functions of others. The Army, these critics say, is the Army of the Crown; we, Secretaries of State forsooth, want to make it the Army of the House of Commons. The Crown, they say, governs the Army through the Commander-in-Chief. The Secretary of State is a mere financial officer, who has gradually intruded on the province of the Crown by means of the power of the purse.

Now, gentlemen, I am bound to tell you that all this is a mere delusion. These writers ought to reflect that to no one can the wrongful attribution of power be more distasteful than to the Sovereign herself. The Queen, gentlemen, as she is the most just and wise, so is she the most constitutional of Sovereigns. The Queen is the undoubted head of the Army; she is also the head of the Navy, and of every branch of the public service. As such she can do no wrong. But she does no wrong for the express reason that all her acts are the acts of her responsible Minister. The doctrine of personal government which you have seen so undisguisedly claimed in Prussia within the last few days is absolutely unknown to our Constitution.

This is not a matter of custom or of unwritten law. The functions of the Secretary of State for War, as "administering the Royal Authority and Prerogative in respect of the Army," are laid down with great precision by the Order of the Queen in Council of June, 1870. Under him there are three great Departments, the heads of which are equally responsible to him; the Commander-in-Chief for the Military Department, the Surveyor-General for the Ordnance and Supply Department, the Financial Secretary for the Finance Department. No act of discipline can be exercised, no appointment or promotion can be made, no troops can be moved, no payments can be made, without the approval, expressed or implied, of the Secretary of State. To say that the Secretary of State has no controlling power in such matters, when he is responsible to Parliament for any improper exercise of the Queen's prerogative in regard to them, is manifestly absurd. On this subject I have never known any misapprehension within the walls of the War Office or in Parliament. Differences of opinion upon subjects in which these great officers advise there have been, and I hope there always will be. There would be something, I should fear, vitally wrong in the state of the War Office, if at all times everybody was agreed as to the details in the administration of that most complicated machine, the Army. But I am fortunate in having the assistance on military questions of so efficient a body of officers as those who, under the authority and responsibility of the most experienced of them all, the present Commander-in-Chief, manage the Military Department; and I believe I may say with perfect justice that, whether as to that Department or as to those of Ordnance or Finance, there never has been a time when the advantages of energetic administration have been better understood, or when there have been fewer arrears in every branch of the office than now.

And now, gentlemen, having set right these misapprehensions, let me pass to the great aims of our policy in military reforms. My first object was to increase the popularity of the service. Of course matters were very different in 1880 from what they had been half a century before. The Duke of Wellington so recently as in 1829 said that "the man who enlists into the British Army is in general the most drunken, and probably the worst man of the trade or profession to which he belongs, or of the

town or village in which he lives." Much, I am happy to say, had been done since then. His pay, his clothes, his food, his education, his barracks, his pension, his treatment generally, had all been cared for and improved. But the improvement had been very gradual. It was only in 1847 that the abolition of the system which was called life service was carried against the opposition of nine-tenths of the Army, by the personal influence of the Duke of Wellington. Service, however, in the Army continued to be unpopular. All its attractions utterly failed to supply us with sufficient men before the end of the Crimean War. Commission after commission, committee after committee, failed to reach the root of the evil. No increase of pay and pension produced a sufficient supply of recruits or an adequate reserve.

In 1867, General Peel, the Conservative War Minister, said that it had come to be the question whether the British Army should be allowed to collapse. It was only when, eleven years ago, short service was established—when, under it, young men could enlist for a few years and then go back to their homes and trades, liable to be recalled to the colours in a great national emergency—that the Army began to obtain men enough for the current requirements of the nation, and a reserve for the contingency of serious war.

I resolved, after carefully studying the mass of evidence about length of service collected by Lord Airey's Committee, to maintain the principle of short service. But the system was a little inelastic. Six years were hardly enough for India and the Colonies, and were unnecessarily long for exclusively home requirements. For the former I raised the six to eight years, and I took power to feed the Reserve with men of three or four years' service, who were not likely to go abroad. These changes, while preserving the general principle, met the greater part of the criticisms to which short service had been exposed.

In one respect, however, I found a great want un-supplied. In common, I am bound to say, with France and Germany and the other military empires, there was in the Army a general complaint of the difficulty of obtaining and retaining good non-commissioned officers. They were too young, and they left too soon. I was soon satisfied that, while enough had been done for the pay of the common soldier, we should look to the better treatment of the non-commissioned officer as the means both

of improving that rank itself, and also of enlisting into the Army a better stamp of men emulous of rising to it. We have, therefore, done much for the non-commissioned officer. In the first place, we established a new rank to which he might be promoted between non-commissioned and commissioned officer, that of Warrant Officer already known in the Navy. And I see by the last Army List, in which we now print the names of all warrant officers as well as those holding commissions, that no less than seven hundred sergeant-majors and others of analogous ranks have obtained this honourable distinction. Secondly, we have generally raised the pay and pension of non-commissioned officers ; and, thirdly, not the least important boon, we have excepted all non-commissioned officers from the ordinary conditions of short service. Every corporal (with the consent of his colonel)—every sergeant (subject only to the special veto of the Secretary of State)—may serve, if he wishes, his full time for a liberal pension. While so serving he will be also eligible for employment in the permanent staff of the Militia or Volunteers with which his battalion is associated.

These great boons have already borne remarkable fruit. There has not been time enough yet to estimate to what extent those who are already non-commissioned officers will take advantage of them ; although in this respect there is manifest progress. But the effect upon recruiting has been very marked. Thanks to the widespread knowledge of the "Advantages of the Army,"<sup>1</sup> and to some extent to the abolition of flogging, we are now getting every week more men and better men. So much is this the case that, to keep within our authorized numbers, we have been able to fulfil the promise I made to Parliament, and to allow a number of men, after less than six years' service, to volunteer into the reserve, with a good round sum of deferred pay in their pockets, becoming thus, at four and twenty or five and twenty years of age, our best recruiting officers in the villages to which they return.

And this brings me, gentlemen, to the second very important branch of last year's reforms. I mean the establishment of the Territorial Regiments. One of Lord Cardwell's main objects was to give a greater local character to our military forces. He linked regiments in pairs, establishing a dépôt for each pair, or, as here, in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Childers had instituted the arrangement by which the pamphlet so named could be obtained at any Post-office.

Pontefract, a double dépôt for four regiments. One regiment was to be at home, and by recruiting, mainly through the agency of the local dépôt, was to supply from year to year drafts for the regiment abroad. With these regiments Militia regiments, having the dépôt in common, were associated ; and it was hoped that the Militia battalions would afford large numbers of recruits to the Line battalions.

To a great extent this plan succeeded ; but it was not universally popular. Since 1873 officers have been appointed, not to one regiment, but with liability to serve indiscriminately in two linked regiments ; and this was eminently distasteful. I therefore, after well weighing the arguments on both sides, determined to give effect to a plan which recommended that the two regiments of the Line and the two regiments of Militia should not merely be linked or associated, but should constitute one territorial regiment of four battalions ; that these new regiments should take their title from the county or district of their dépôt, and that in every possible respect their battalions should be bound together and assimilated.

Nothing struck me so much when I visited recently the garrisons and dépôts in the south of England, and especially inspected the recruits, as the extent to which, during the last few months, they have come from the county from which their regiment draws its title. In illustration of this rising local sentiment I was much impressed by a speech the other day made by Colonel Jordan, the colonel of the Berkshire district, from which what used to be the 49th and 66th regiments now take the common name of the Berkshire Regiment. It was at a meeting for a memorial to the men of the 66th who fell at Maiwand, and I will read to you his words. "The regiment lost in the battle of Maiwand fifty-two Berkshire men, some of whom I knew myself. At the time of the battle there were 227 Berkshire men serving in the regiment. Immediately I heard of the loss, I knew that the regiment would want recruits, and that the other battalion—they were now joined in one—would require men to go abroad. I went into the matter ; the response was splendid. Within six weeks 152 recruits came in voluntarily ; I was quite surprised at the number, because it was at a busy time in August and September. At the present time there are 429 Berkshire men serving in the second battalion, and in a very short time the whole of the second

battalion will consist of Berkshire men. At the present time I only require ninety-three men, and I have two hundred recruits in the barracks more than I want for the militia and the regiment." This, gentlemen, is the spirit which is growing up all over the country, and which we will do our best to promote. What I want to bring about is a state of public opinion as to our military forces which will make each county, or in some cases, as here, each division of a county, feel a special interest in a particular regiment and the men belonging to it; and I mean by a regiment not only its line battalions but its militia battalions, and also, I hope soon to say, its volunteer battalions. I wish to see the line and the auxiliary forces closely bound together, the men in the one feeling themselves to be the comrades of the men in the other, drawn from the same classes, wearing the same uniform, proud of the same colours and badges. I want to see the permanent staff of all having the same origin, with the district colonel at their head, selected from those who have spent their lives in the regiment. In the same way I hope to localize our artillery, binding together the Royal regiment with those militia artillery regiments of which the country is so justly proud, and also, possibly, with volunteer artillery. The localization of the cavalry presents greater difficulties, but I fully expect to add to the efficiency of the yeomanry, in which we of the West Riding take so much interest. Gentlemen, I firmly believe that by thus evoking and developing sound local feeling, we shall do much more to bring about and widen a true *esprit de corps* in the Army than ever was due to the mere number in the Army List assigned to a particular line battalion.

And this brings me, gentlemen, to a controversy, of which you doubtless have heard something, about the numbering of regiments, and the supposed mischief we have done by substituting for numbers territorial titles.

I frankly admit, gentlemen, that I should have been glad to spare so many officers the personal inconvenience which this change has entailed on them. We all know that nothing is so vexatious to the inhabitants of a street as to have the number of their houses suddenly altered for some public advantage; and this, I am told, all but produced a revolution in Oxford Street the other day. No one, I think, would accuse me of wantonly causing annoyance to the great body of regimental officers over whose interests it is my privilege to watch.

But I will ask the critics of the change a simple question. A regiment now consists of what used to be, as a general rule, two regiments of the line, and one or two regiments of militia. You have here at Pontefract, for instance, the South Yorkshire Regiment, consisting of what used to be the 51st and the 105th Foot, and the old 1st West York Militia. Those former regiments are now battalions, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, of a consolidated regiment. If a number is to be retained, which is that number to be? Of course one regiment cannot have two or more numbers. Is, then, the old territorial West Yorkshire Militia to call itself a battalion of the 51st, or is the 51st to call itself a battalion of the 105th? We heard, gentlemen, I may tell you, a good deal on this subject before we definitely adopted the change. The officers of some regiments were indifferent to the change, as they never called themselves by their number—for instance, in some of the Fusilier regiments, or the Buffs, or the Borderers, or the Connaught Rangers, or the Highland regiments. Others, no doubt, would have greatly wished, if possible, to keep their own numbers. But the one point upon which we found them all agreed was, when they became one of two battalions in a regiment, their objection to take the number of the other battalion. Any title, territorial or non-territorial, was better than this. I think you will therefore see, gentlemen, that even had we wished to retain the numbers, and had persuaded the militia to accept them, the solution would have been as far off as ever.

But what is the real history of these numbers? When regiments were first formed, and even in the last century, they were always called by their colonel's name. The only object for numbers, which were adopted later, was to mark their precedence. Since then those numbers have been constantly changed, as often, in fact, as in forty-nine instances during the last century. One of these changes is a little instructive. The 100th Regiment became in 1798 the 92nd. In 1816, what had in turn become the 100th was turned into the 99th, and then the 102nd became the 100th. This in turn was disbanded, and later, in 1858, a new 100th was raised, now called the Leinster Regiment. What *esprit de corps* could have attached to such a number?

But, in truth, giving regiments territorial titles is no novelty. Numbers were not thought much of in 1782,

just a hundred years ago. In that year Field-Marshal Conway,<sup>1</sup> one of the ablest soldier-statesmen England has known, conveyed to the Army the following order from the King, namely: "That each regiment should take a county name, and be looked upon as attached to that county, and that colonels should endeavour by all means in their power to cultivate and improve that connection, so as to create a mutual attachment between the county and the regiment, which may at all times be useful towards recruiting the regiment." We, gentlemen, are only reverting to Field-Marshal Conway's policy. Unfortunately, he was not able to combine the line and the militia, and when the Army was enormously increased in the great French war, the new regiments were raised independently of local connection, which in time was nearly obliterated. Our reform is more thorough, and, whatever other changes may be made, I believe the territorial character of our Army is now firmly secured.

There is, however, one reform about which I must detain you for a few moments. I promised Parliament that I would do my utmost to remove what is an undoubted blot in our recent system—I mean our unpreparedness for small wars. Should we be unhappily engaged in a considerable war, we have large reserves to bring out. But these are only available on what the law calls a great national emergency. And what we want is to have a more moderate force, say of some 25,000 men, always ready for active service, and this without disturbing our regular, I may say, clock-work arrangements, for the relief of our forces in India and the colonies. Now, it was for this that I asked Parliament to increase the infantry by 3000 men. And I proposed to effect our object by gradually building up, at the head of what is called the roster, sixteen battalions containing, with their dépôts, 1100 or 1000 men each, 800 of whom would be fit for service anywhere; with eight more in the Mediterranean also 800 strong. These, with cavalry, artillery, and Guards, will constitute a thoroughly efficient *corps d'armée*.

Now, gentlemen, Rome was not built in a day; and

<sup>1</sup> Henry Seymour Conway, Secretary of State, and afterwards Commander-in-Chief under Lord Rockingham; he had served at Fontenoy and Culloden. He was a versatile man, literary, dramatic, and inventive; and designed the well-known bridge at Henley-on-Thames.

battalions of this strength, specially with the demands made from Ireland, cannot be improvised even in six months. We have, however, I may tell you, worked out with great patience and care all the details of this reform. I watch them from day to day, and I can assure you that I shall not be satisfied until, step by step, this most necessary weapon, an efficient first *corps d'armée*, is ready to our hands. Every month, I may tell you, is bringing, and will bring, it nearer completion.

I have told you now, gentlemen, something of our past policy, and how we have fulfilled and are fulfilling the promises made to Parliament last session. Let me say a word about the future. It would be, of course, most improper that I should anticipate, in addressing you, what I may have to propose to Parliament in moving the Army Estimates. But there are some general principles, about which, among my constituents, I need not be over reticent. I gave a pledge to inquire, so far as I could do so in the recess, into questions affecting the Volunteers. I take, as I took from the first, great interest in what was called the Volunteer movement; and I hope to show that I have redeemed my pledge, and in more than one respect shall be able to propose what will add to their efficiency. I also hope, so long as I hold the seals of my present office, to do all in my power towards improving the condition and raising the character of the soldier. Nothing disgusts me more than the vulgar prejudice against him which still permits his uniform in some public places to be considered a reproach, and not an honour. I cannot deny that there was once some justification for this, but there is none now; and I should like to bring home this truth unmistakably to the public mind. Again, as to our officers, there are two directions in which I should like to move. There has been a good deal of discussion lately in the press about regimental messes, and the unavoidable cost which they are supposed to bring on young officers. I express, now, no opinion on this particular point; but we have arrangements under discussion which will, I hope, tend to make life in the Army less expensive, without making it less popular. On the other hand, I should like all officers, specially younger officers, to read an extract from a letter I lately saw from one of the most distinguished soldiers of the day. I would ask them to note it well, and perhaps to reflect that it indicates the direction in which opinion is moving as to their duties. "The foreign officer," the

writer says, "teaches the soldier to ride, to march, to shoot, to drill, and in this he is always at work. With us it is too much the custom to regard the adjutant and the drill instructors as the masters of our Army school. The Army is a profession, in which the officers are the legitimate professors, a great school, in which they are the tutors and teachers." I pass from this subject to one of another character, as to which I can only speak in general terms. I have told you that I think most highly of the value of our auxiliary forces, and I do so specially because of their eminently defensive character. There are other methods of defence which we have been carefully studying lately. I do not allude to costly fortifications, but to other weapons which science has placed in our hands at comparatively small expense. And, gentlemen, there is one defence, one security, against the horrors of war to which, I confess, I attach the highest importance. Sir William Napier said of the British people that they most frequently got into trouble because they were "warlike, and not military." I wish to see the people of England in the best sense military, but not warlike. It is one of the happiest results of the short service system, and of the general spread of volunteering, that they produce in a large number of the Queen's subjects a military rather than a warlike spirit. By a military spirit, I mean habits of discipline, respect for lawful command, and, at the same time, independence of character, and that dislike of slovenliness which, as a general rule, marks the man who has served. I should, therefore, rejoice if, as I have said elsewhere, our schoolboys were taught more drill, and if it was the exception for a young man, who could afford it, not to be a Volunteer. And I should not regret were such a state of feeling about military service to prevail as would justify the Government and Parliament in establishing a system under which a much larger proportion of the youth of the country might, if they wished, voluntarily spend a short time, at or soon after the age of twenty, in the ranks. In an army really representing the average intelligence and right feeling of the country, such a short experience of military service would benefit our youth of every class, whether in town or country, whether artisan, mechanic, or peasant.

But, gentlemen, these are, I fear, matters for the distant future; and to-night I have endeavoured rather to place before you clearly what has been already effected, and to

answer some criticisms on the reforms agitated and made during the last twelve years, and which have now received legislative sanction. For the present I desire no great changes in our Army organization, but rather rest, to work out with care what we have established, to correct defects and omissions, and to carry to their legitimate conclusions principles which Parliament has endorsed. This is, perhaps, not a very heroic or ambitious programme for a War Minister to proclaim; but I shall be content if it receives the approval of my constituents and of my country.

On the 25th of June, 1881, a Royal Warrant had been issued which consolidated the many new regulations which Mr. Childers had introduced into the Army. In the following February (1882) a *Corrigenda* Warrant was approved, making certain amendments and corrections in minor details, and it was in explaining to her Majesty the necessity for these further changes that Mr. Childers wrote as follows:—

*To the Queen.*

February 23, 1882.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Majesty's gracious letter of yesterday. Mr. Childers is decidedly of opinion that small changes of system, even where much can be said for them, are, as a rule, undesirable; and it has been his policy, as exhibited in your Majesty's Warrant of the 25th of June last, and in the *Corrigenda* Warrant of which your Majesty has just approved, to collect together and systematize amendments which experience has shown to be necessary.

Mr. Childers humbly submits that the number of isolated changes which he has submitted to your Majesty is very small indeed, each having arisen out of some pressing matter, or being required to put right some inconsistency of practice. But Mr. Childers humbly submits to your Majesty that one of the greatest evils in administration is the practice, so prevalent in all Governments, of adopting a great change in organization without carrying

it to its legitimate conclusion, and without foresight of the inevitable consequential changes.

Mr. Childers would illustrate this to your Majesty by what has been done about short service. The substitution for the former system, under which soldiers served for two periods of twelve and nine years, ending with a pension, of a new system, under which they only serve with the colours, as a rule, for seven years (extended, under Mr. Childers's advice, to eight years), has been, to a certain point, worked out as to the infantry; but, until now, nothing has been done to meet the serious and inevitable changes which, after 1882, it will produce in the cavalry and artillery.

Again, even as to the infantry, little or no consideration has been officially given to the fact that the new system materially alters the provision necessary for married soldiers, soldiers' families, and pensioners; inasmuch as, except non-commissioned officers and a very few privates, no soldiers will be married, and the pensioners will be those who have been injured or wounded. So, again, with respect to officers, the changes which Mr. Childers has submitted for your Majesty's approval, doing away with the lamentable arrangements under which more than half the number of those who enter the army would be compulsorily retired at forty, and substituting a more systematic retirement at the ages of fifty-five, sixty-two, and sixty-seven, involve a great number of consequential amendments of much nicety, but as to which unnecessary delay can only be vexatious to all concerned. It has been Mr. Childers's aim in these matters to exercise foresight, and, instead of waiting till confusion and complication arise from the want of provision for inevitable results, to look them fairly in the face, and deal with them as promptly, but, at the same time, as thoroughly as possible. Mr. Childers submits to your Majesty that, if when two regiments were united in one brigade, and when the later officers were appointed to a brigade instead of a regiment, the inevitable results had not only been foreseen, but provided for, the whole of the difficulties which presented themselves last year as to the formation and designation of the territorial regiments might have been obviated.

Administrators have to contend with two great evils: one, the feeling that it is enough to provide for the exigencies of the moment, leaving it to others to deal with those that follow; the other, the lurking hope that, if

matters are left in an unfinished state, they may be more easily undone. Against both these, Mr. Childers humbly submits to your Majesty that it is his duty to strive ; and it is because he always keeps these dangers in view, that he fears your Majesty may judge him to be making proposals not required at the moment, and excessive in number. Mr. Childers will endeavour to obey implicitly your Majesty's commands, but it is his duty to represent to your Majesty all the imperfections which tend to injure the system committed to his administration.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, BARRACKPORE, February 20, 1882.

I am much obliged to you for sending me a copy of the speech you made at Pontefract. I have read it with great interest. What you said about your wish to promote good feeling between the country and Army delights me. I am quite sure that the line and the auxiliary forces should be "closely bound together," and I hope in a few years to see, not only the line, but the artillery and cavalry, much more closely connected than they are at present, with the local forces. It was this feeling that made me in favour of localizing regiments.

What was done last year to improve the position and prospects of non-commissioned officers will, in my opinion, do more than anything to render the Army efficient. The non-commissioned ranks are the backbone of regiments, and however well qualified a man may be by intelligence and education for the position of corporal or sergeant, it requires time for him to get that influence over private soldiers without which he is of little use. Many good men would not accept promotion when they knew that they were only to remain for a very limited time with the colours ; it was not worth their while to undertake the responsibility and to separate themselves from their friends amongst the privates. The result was that we were getting a class of non-commissioned officers in the Army who were without power or influence, and who, from not knowing how to deal with men, were often the cause of soldiers committing serious crimes.

This great improvement in the position of non-commissioned officers, and increasing the length of service in the colonies and India to eight years, quite reconciled me

to the short-service system. Though, as no doubt you are aware from my report on the German army, I would like to see a slight leaven of old privates in the ranks, partly because such men are valuable as examples to, and in controlling young soldiers, at times when it would not be desirable for non-commissioned officers to interfere, and partly because we have in the Army a certain number of men who are not fit for the non-commissioned rank, and who have nothing to fall back upon when their time with the colours is up.

It is very desirable that non-commissioned officers should be separated as much as possible from privates, and this will become necessary if, as I believe will be the case, two classes of men enlist, one to serve for a few years only, the other with the object of promotion and remaining on for pension.

I should like to see the status of these latter raised as soon as they become full corporals ; and in no way could this be better secured than by the formation of corporals' messes. I don't think these would require any assistance from the State, but, if they did, the expense would be very slight.

I am very glad to see that the necessity of having a *corps d'armée* ready for service is so fully recognized ; this is, perhaps, the most important element in a system of short service. I am also delighted to hear that the Volunteer movement is to come in for a share of your consideration, and that the question of regimental messes will be no longer overlooked. It is very necessary that the expense of these should be reduced.

I am sure you will not think these remarks obtrusive. You were good enough to ask me to write to you, and I should like you to know how much I appreciate what you are doing for the Army.

I have spent a pleasant week here, and have had some interesting conversations with Lord Ripon and Sir Donald Stewart. The latter is much exercised about the great increase in violent crime in the British Army in India during the last two years ; indeed, this year the number of cases is not very short of that extreme state of indiscipline in 1870 which compelled Lord Napier of Magdala to represent to the Government of India and to the War Office the necessity of correcting this condition of military disorder by the only effectual means, viz., the enforcement of all sentences of penal servitude, up to a limit of five years, in India, and the full term of imprisonment in all cases.

The proposal was sanctioned, and in the very first year, viz., 1871, the crime of insubordination with violence fell from a hundred and sixty to sixty-six, and in successive years it continued to fall, until the low rate of thirty-five was reached in 1874.

Enforcing sentences of penal servitude and imprisonment in India was in accordance with the Mutiny Act, but, with the expiration of that, this check upon insubordination ceased—for under the Army Discipline and Regulation Act<sup>1</sup> a prisoner sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding twelve months, or to a term of penal servitude, must be sent home, unless, in the case of imprisonment, the Court shall, for special reasons, otherwise order.

It is curious that the partial increase in violent crime in 1880, and the great increase in 1881, has been coincident with the change in the law. There can be but one conclusion; and I hope it will be found possible to modify section 127.<sup>2</sup>

I will send my reply next week to the Adjutant-General on the subject of officers generally of corps and battalions being made more available than at present for the drill and instruction of the non-commissioned officers and men under their command.

*From Admiral Sir George Willes.*

HONG KONG, March 16, 1882.

You asked me to write to you occasionally from the Far East. I cannot commence at a better time than the present, when I can congratulate you on your Pontefract speech, which I think excellent, and which seems to have given general satisfaction. I take an intense interest in military matters, particularly in what are derisively called "Cardwell Schemes," having witnessed the enormous failure of the perfect system of long service! I must not get on such points. What I have to comment on is the clear and admirable way you put the "Constitutional question." Had this been put forward in 1871, how much bitterness, how much *passive* resistance, would have been spared. To my knowledge it has been considered by nearly all military officers, that the Secretary of State was usurping power and acting *illegally*.

<sup>1</sup> Of 1879.

<sup>2</sup> The section had already been slightly modified, the Army Act, 1881, s. 131, having come into operation.

There has been a constant hope that the military element would eventually prevail and the 1871 measures be reversed. How could a system, however good, succeed under such conditions? Had you published the Order in Council of 1868 about the Admiralty changes, much of your naval difficulties would have been spared. The Navy is an obedient service; but it was believed by officers of *high* rank that you had no right to make your changes, *hence* much passive resistance. If you were now to publish the Order in Council defining the Secretary of State's powers, your task would be comparatively easy.

I have kept my health well and seen much of this station. This is my third period of service here; and it is forty years, next month, since I first visited Hong Kong. The changes and improvements, both in China and Japan, are something wonderful. I have been obliged to recommend some reductions on our outlying establishments, which the substitution of steam for sailing-vessels and junks rendered necessary; but you well know that nothing is so unpopular as treating Government money as your own. Our course last year turned out successfully; and an order has gone to all stations directing that ships should be assembled and worked together. All our work, so far as ships with single screw is concerned, is now done under canvas—to the advantages of the officers and men, certainly to the public purse—as coal out here is rather dear. No foreign government permits anything but the Japanese article to be employed, on account of the expense. I visited the Russian possessions on the coast of Corea, taking a large squadron there, that the officers and men might see the weakness of the nation which caused us all such terror, both in China and India.

Vladivostok, the arsenal, the *third* in power of Russia, does not deserve the name of one, and it is frozen up for about three or four months in the year. I have been much amused at its being asserted in the newspapers that I had reported to the Government in a *contrary* sense.

Russia will eventually move south and annex the Corea. Japan will oppose her; but I am rather puzzled about the future of that country. In twenty years the people have adopted European costume, customs, and got a large debt. This does not sound real. But if all goes well, Russia may find a wholesome check in the Japanese.

China has commenced telegraphs; railways will follow, and then she will learn her strength. What will she do

with it? I do not think it an aggressive nation. The railway will bring more dollars and more peace.

You will be glad to hear that nothing can exceed the efficiency of our Navy out here; good men, good officers, excellent health, discipline very satisfactory on the whole; but, when absent from a suitable prison, there is great difficulty in keeping the young men in order: long terms of imprisonment by sentence of court-martial have no deterrent effect whatever. I know you are very strong on the subject of corporal punishment, and, no doubt, public opinion is strongly on your side; the men, however, here *never* complain of it, and would much prefer a whipping to penal servitude. I quite think it should only be administered by sentence of court-martial. The return of Naval courts-martial is a frightful document. It is the young men from nineteen to twenty-two who set their officers at defiance.<sup>1</sup> How an army is to be governed in the field during war I do not quite understand. Most probably another Duke of Wellington will spring up, who will take high-handed measures, which will be *approved*—if he is *successful*.

I see we have another periodical scare as to the number of our ironclads as compared to France. No doubt we are rather behindhand. What ships are to be built is the question. On that point, considering the power of the Republic and the system of panics, I think our policy should be eminently conservative. Thus, if France builds *two* ironclads, with guns *en barbette* and a broadside battery, fully rigged, then we should build *three*. If Italy builds a *Duilio*, then we must, however foolish. This is an awkward thing to avow, but I fear it is correct. Never was there such a puzzle! Old Sir G. Sartorius has lived too long, ninety-two. He became celebrated for his proposal of the ram, and he has lived to see its power almost *annihilated* by the torpedo. Then comes the gun; once muzzle loaders were perfect; then comes a powder which requires time for proper explosion, which means a longer gun, that cannot be, so far as the Navy is concerned. Can breech-loaders be made really efficient? On this subject you have the enlightened advice of Adye, who will say "No;" and even still there is a whisper from Woolwich, which says Adye is right. I do not think the question of ironclads, etc., should be left to the Admiralty, but there should be a Royal Commission every five years, consisting of

<sup>1</sup> This was Lord Alcester's experience, see Vol. I. p. 288.

all First Lords, naval officers of reputation, experts in ship-building, from *inside* and *outside* of Whitehall, who should lay down what ought to be the type of ship in the immediate future, *i.e.* five years. I could continue writing pages, but the War Secretary is a busy man, whose health must not break down again in the middle of important changes.

I hear constantly from our friend Beauchamp Seymour. It must have gratified you to back up Lord Northbrook's recommendation for his G.C.B. What a success he has had since he came to your elbow in 1868 and 1869.

On the 13th of March, 1882, Mr. Childers introduced the Army Estimates, and during his speech he made the following observations :—

We have given very careful attention to a subject of considerable public interest—I mean the expense of regimental messes. The attention of general officers and officers commanding regiments has been called to the necessity of regulating the mess charges to officers, with a view to economy, and in order that those who have not large private means may be able to live within the limits of their income. This refers not only to ordinary mess charges—as to which officers should be able to have their three daily meals for four shillings—but to incidental expenses and subscriptions. Reports on this subject will be received from every general and commanding officer next month.

We have also appointed a committee, under Sir Garnet Wolseley, to inquire whether the expenses of officers might not be reduced by furniture and mess property being found by the public, as in the Navy, officers of course being charged a percentage. At present, except a table and two chairs, an officer's quarter is bare; and he is bound to carry about with him portable furniture, often of a very expensive kind, beds, chairs, baths, chests of drawers, washhand-stands, etc. This is not only burdensome to officers, but entails great expense on the public, every officer being allowed many hundredweights of baggage, from nine hundredweight to a subaltern upwards. So also every mess has to transport plate, crockery, glass, and all the details of an establishment, at great cost to Government and the mess itself. All this employs men on fatigue duties, and is a hindrance to quick movements. The chief

objection to change is the first cost, but the Committee will, it is hoped, propose a reasonable system.

So far as the men are concerned, the first important change which we have introduced relates to canteens. Formerly, canteens were often let to contractors, but some years ago they were generally handed over to regimental charge, the profits being devoted to the amusements and comforts of the men and their families. Recreation-rooms and coffee-bars have also been generally established, and shops where groceries and other articles can be got. There have been great varieties in practice ; but the shops, and often the recreation-rooms, have usually been connected with the canteens. It is proposed to separate altogether the shops and recreation-rooms from the canteens and attach the coffee-bars to the former. The canteen will be almost exclusively used for the sale of beer at a moderate profit, the coffee-bar and the shop being merely self-supporting. There will be a committee of three in every battalion, one junior officer supervising the conduct of the canteen ; another, that of the coffee-bar, shop, and recreation-room ; and a superior officer exercising general supervision. This has been strongly recommended in many quarters, and the arrangement will be very beneficial to the men.

Another matter we have had to consider is the effect of short service on the marriage of men, and on the provision for children and for pensioners. Short service has already produced considerable changes in these respects, and we have thought it right to prepare for still greater changes to come. With this object, we have appointed a committee to examine into the two pensioner hospitals at Chelsea and Kilmainham, and the Duke of York's school at Chelsea and the Hibernian school, and they will consider the effect of the great diminutions in the calls on these institutions which must inevitably come before long. With respect to marriage, I hope, when short service becomes universal, that it will not be necessary to provide for the marriage of any considerable number of men, except non-commissioned officers. In point of expense I believe the probable reduction in the percentage of married men will save the country, in transport and other charges, something like £50,000 a-year. To this subject we are giving our best attention.

Great inconvenience and expense to both officers and men, have hitherto been caused by what appears to us the

unnecessary frequency in the movement of troops from one station to another. Of course, there are circumstances in Ireland and elsewhere for which no precise rule can be laid down ; but we have arrived at the conclusion that where these circumstances do not exist, regiments or battalions ought not to be moved oftener than every two years.

With regard to the efforts for the improvement of the shooting of the Army, we appointed a Committee last year to inquire into the matter, and although a great deal of the report of that Committee was necessarily confidential, and, therefore, I could not lay it upon the table, yet we have been able to adopt certain of the recommendations it contained ; a proceeding that will, of course, involve some additional charge.

I was asked to-day by the hon. and gallant member for East Suffolk (Colonel Barne) what had been done with regard to the very important subject of an improved uniform for the Army when on active service, which he has frequently brought forward during the last few years. The first element of the question was to decide whether any change should be made in the colour of the present uniform, and whether that which was the least conspicuous should be selected for general use on active service. We have appointed a committee to consider the subject, among the members of which are Professor Stokes<sup>1</sup> and Professor Abel,<sup>2</sup> and they are now making the necessary inquiries with regard to it.

Turning to the Auxiliary Forces, we propose that a portion of the militia reserve should be trained this year with the line battalions of their territorial regiments. We are also going to do what will be hailed with satisfaction by the militia ; namely, to issue to them, for the first time, between 80,000 and 90,000 Martini-Henry rifles, as we have now a sufficient number of those weapons in store. We were pressed to do the same for the Volunteers ; but we must begin, in the first place, with the militia.

We have made a new arrangement with regard to the militia recruits. When the militia quarters are at the dépôt centre, the recruits are to go there to be trained at once on enrolment, instead of having to wait until the usual time, when their regiments are called out. We hope that this will not only bring more recruits to the militia,

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir George Gabriel Stokes, M.P. for Cambridge University ; at one time President of the Royal Society.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Frederick Abel, Bart.

but also strengthen the union with the line, and bring more men to the line also. We expect to be able to arrange for six or eight battalions of the militia joining in the autumn manœuvres this year, and we propose to establish two militia submarine mining companies at Plymouth and Chatham similar to those at Portsmouth.

With regard to the Volunteers, there are two or three improvements contemplated, which I will now explain. First, we propose to increase the camp allowance by £10,000, so as to allow some 20,000 more men to go into camp ; and, secondly, we propose to increase the capitulation grant for officers passing in tactics, from fifty to sixty shillings. We intend also to invite 15,000 men to join the manœuvres, and, although we are unable to issue the Martini-Henry rifle to the force generally, we propose to grant 4500 instead of 3000 for match shooting. We are unable to recommend the issue of greatcoats generally to the Volunteers, but we propose that, as regards capes, they may obtain them by payments spread over three years.

It will be remembered that last year the regiments of infantry militia were made third and fourth battalions of the territorial regiments, and we took power under the Army Act of last session<sup>1</sup> to make similar arrangements as regards the Volunteers. We do not propose to make any change in the character of the force, except that, instead of being merely described as located in the territorial districts, the rifle corps will become volunteer battalions of the territorial regiments, and we propose that the officers of their permanent staff should, as far as possible, be drawn from the regiments to which they will belong.

If I had time—and, at half-past two in the morning, I am sure the House is tired—I should like to say something about one suggestion in connection with the Volunteers which we do not propose to adopt at present, but which we should like the different corps to consider. At present the Volunteer is called efficient if he shoots away sixty rounds, and his corps receive its capitulation grant accordingly. What we should like to do would be to carry out an arrangement under which the test of efficiency would not be merely shooting away so many rounds, but obtaining certain points in marksmanship. We do not wish to save

<sup>1</sup> The Army Act, 1881, superseded the Army Discipline and Regulation Act, 1879.

anything in the amount of the capitation grant, but I think we may, in the way suggested, greatly improve the efficiency of the Volunteers.

*To Sir Frederick Roberts (now Earl Roberts, K.G.).*

WAR OFFICE, *March 17, 1882.*

Let me just say how much we felt for you when we heard of Lady Roberts's death<sup>1</sup> at Hampton Court. I do not think the shock of such a loss is much lessened in fact by its occurring at an age when it must be expected. I was prepared, of course, by your telegram for your letter of the 5th of February. Much as I regret your not being able to help us here, I am sure that you will have exercised a wise discretion; and I repeat that your not accepting the Quartermaster-Generalship of the Army will not in the least prejudice you with her Majesty's Government or the Commander-in-Chief. I sincerely hope that the day may come when your services may be given to us (although I can hardly expect myself to be in office long) here. Your second letter, which arrived by the last mail, greatly interested me. I am extremely glad that you approve to so great an extent what we have done. I am sending you a copy of Wednesday's *Times*, with the report of what I said on moving the Estimates between 1 and 2.30 a.m., on Tuesday. I think you will be interested to see how far we have succeeded in building up the 1st Army Corps, and how satisfactory the present state of recruiting, and the feeling among non-commissioned officers, are. We have really touched a new social stratum, and are obtaining men, not because they want to get away from the scenes of scrapes, but because they hope to do better in the Army than at their trades. I hear of this, officially and privately, in all directions. The effect on non-commissioned officers is marked in many battalions, although the time is so short since the change was made. You will see also what we are doing about the artillery, with the consent of all concerned. About a few old privates being allowed to go on pension, I find a good deal of difference of opinion. We are giving permission for a few, but what is represented to me is that a private,

<sup>1</sup> Mother of Earl Roberts, widow of General Sir Abraham Roberts, G.C.B.

not fit to be a non-commissioned officer, may be worth keeping till his fifteenth year of service, but hardly ever till his twenty-first. If so, as allowing a private to re-engage means an additional cost to the country of about £300, is three years' service worth so much? I have personally no strong opinion one way or the other, but the majority of the soldiers here, whether advocates of long or short service, are against the re-engagement of the private unless he is a bandsman, &c. We are a good deal exercised about the springing up of serious crime in the Indian Army. I doubt whether I could persuade the House of Commons just now to revert to the old law, and we are writing to Sir Donald Stewart,<sup>1</sup> advising that, instead of penal servitude, the severe punishment should be two years' imprisonment, the whole of which may be in India. If this does not stop these offences we shall have to go to Parliament. I shall read with much interest your report on officers being more available for drill, etc. Have you any particular views about the Channel tunnel? We have all been rather surprised by the explosion of hostile feeling; considering that the idea has been before the public and the Army for ten years, and has been the subject of several Acts of Parliament, and of a treaty with France.

Mrs. Childers joins me in very kind regards to Lady Roberts and yourself. We hope that you may have seen Francis<sup>2</sup> before this, who is with Macpherson.

The reply to this letter is of special interest. In it Lord Roberts draws Mr. Childers's attention to the need of a handsome full dress for occasions, and of a different dress, for rough work, of a material something like "what is known as *khaki*."

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

OOTACAMUND, April 17, 1882.

I am much obliged for your letter of the 17th ult., and for your kind allusions to my mother's death. She lived

<sup>1</sup> Commander-in-Chief in India; afterwards Field-Marshal and Governor of Chelsea Hospital: died 1900.

<sup>2</sup> His son Francis entered the artillery in 1878; he went on General Macpherson's staff from India to the Egyptian War later in the year. He died of typhoid at Ootacamund in May, 1886.

to a good old age (83), but she had all her faculties to the last, and is a great loss to me.

It is very gratifying to me to hear that you approve of my having refused the Quartermaster-Generalship, and that my having done so will not prejudice me with her Majesty's Government. There is plenty of work for soldiers out here, and I hope I may be able to do something towards improving the Madras Army before I leave the command.

Many thanks for sending me the *Times*. I read, with great interest, the report of what you said in moving the Army Estimates. I am sure that a better class of men will be tempted to enlist now that the position and prospects of non-commissioned officers are so much improved.

The great blot, if you will permit me to say so, of the short-service system was the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of getting good non-commissioned officers; men would not undertake the responsibility and trouble attendant upon the post, when they knew that they would have to leave the colours at the end of their six years' service.

With so many young soldiers passing rapidly through the ranks, it is now more than ever necessary to have reliable men for the non-commissioned ranks. This, I think, all admit, except those who, from want of sufficient regimental training, do not appreciate the value of, and help that can be given by, experienced men in those grades.

Sergeants are now looking forward to becoming eligible for service in the militia. They, especially the married ones, consider this a great boon.

The great thing is to raise the status of non-commissioned officers. In this view, I am endeavouring to separate them from the privates while in hospital. It is not always possible to provide a separate room, but a certain amount of comfort and privacy can be secured by screening off one end of a ward.

I see that you have appointed a committee to consider the best colour of uniform for service. I shall be interested in the result. My own idea is<sup>1</sup> that, for a volunteer Army

<sup>1</sup> This marks Lord Roberts's prescience. At the present moment (1901), the War Office are introducing what he here was advocating (1882).

such as ours, an attractive uniform is necessary ; at the same time, we require something like what is known as "khaki" in India, for rough work and service.

This was recognized as long ago as 1857, when the troops ordered from England to China were supplied with a khaki-coloured blouse, which could be worn over, or without, the red coat as might be found desirable.

Guided by this principle, I have just settled the long-discussed question as to the most suitable dress for the Madras Army. It will, I think, be found useful, and it certainly is a great improvement on the present uniform.

You ask me whether I have "any particular views about the Channel tunnel." I have ; they are embodied in the accompanying memorandum, which I hope you will agree with.

The question is such an important one that it deserves to be considered in all its bearings most carefully before a final decision is given.

The following letters are printed here, because (although not in their regular chronological sequence) they contain a continuation of the discussion carried on in the foregoing correspondence.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

HEAD QUARTERS, MADRAS ARMY, *January 1, 1884.*

Although you are no longer at the War Office, I feel sure that you still take considerable interest in Army matters. I will not, therefore, apologize for sending you a paper I was induced to write, on reading Lord Hartington's speech when returning thanks for the Army at the Mansion House last August.

When you once offered me the Quartermaster-Generalship, you were good enough to say that you were anxious to have my help in the administration of the Army. I fully appreciated the compliment, and received it as an assurance that my criticisms on Army questions were accepted by you in the spirit in which they were offered. I never had any predilection for, or dislike to, any particular scheme ; what I felt was, that the system I had practical experience of during the campaign in Afghanistan was not suited to the conditions of our Army, and while I recognized

the necessity of a reserve, I did not want to see the fighting line sacrificed to form it.

My endeavour now has been to arrange for a reserve, and at the same time maintain an efficient army; in fact, to make the short-service system, in a modified form, applicable to our requirements.

People's opinions will, of course, differ as to whether the proposals I have made are likely to produce the desired result: all I want is to have them carefully considered. The reasons I have given for the present state of the Army are, I am confident, correct, and I am equally confident that if my recommendations are accepted, and fairly worked out, the present difficulties about the Army will gradually disappear.

Some extra cost must be incurred if our Army is to continue a voluntary one. I have endeavoured to minimize this cost, and I doubt if the additional pay I have proposed will, in the long run, amount to more than large bounties, which will certainly have to be given from time to time, unless the present feeling of discontent is removed. The more unpopular the Army is, the more expensive it will be. I sent a copy of the paper to the Duke of Cambridge and Lord Hartington by the last mail. I hope to hear that you and they approve of it.

We wish you and yours a Happy New Year.

*To Sir Frederick Roberts.*

117, PICCADILLY, January 29, 1884.

Thank you very much for your letter, and for sending me your paper on Free-trade in the Army.<sup>1</sup> There is much in it with which I cordially agree, and the whole deserves careful weighing by those in authority. But I will venture to make a few remarks on one or two points of detail.

(1) I was not aware that the minimum height in the line in 1870 was 5 feet 8 inches, and that the better short-service recruiting then was due to its reduction. In 1870 a very large addition was made to the Army, I think 10,000 men, and this necessitated nearly doubling the number of recruits. But when I took office the height was fluctuating between 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 5 inches. I fixed it at 5 feet 4 inches, and raised the age, and the result was a far more rapid recruiting than the number

<sup>1</sup> This paper was reprinted in the issue (the first under that title) for January, 1901, of *The Nineteenth Century and After*.

fixed by Parliament would bear. I had to check this, too much as it now turns out, and Lord Hartington restored the state of things to something better than it was (as to recruits) in 1880. Now we are getting them at the rate of 37,000 a year, and Wolseley's figures on statistics are conclusive as to their character.

(2) You speak of our using in war the system of bounty to attract volunteers from other battalions. This is what I stopped. No one can be transferred except within the same regiment, and I sent out Wolseley's army without a single transfer. We had prepared another army corps also without a single transfer. I speak of the Guards and line, not the cavalry, which is on the old system.

I wish you could read on this subject the papers to which I have had access as to the state of matters in the old Peninsular War, in the Duke of York's time, and again in the Crimean War.

However, I pass from these points of difference to those in which I cordially go with you. Especially do I think that the Service should be made more popular, by kindness and by concessions to the reasonable wishes of the men. This is not wanted for recruiting, as recent figures show, but it would, I think, be useful in itself, and raise the men in each other's esteem and that of the public.

As a matter of fact, the Army at home has been (I think rightly) sacrificed to the Army in India. You have no recruits, no very young men, full leave to keep for longer service the magnificent force entrusted to you. The money part is practically in your own hands, and so is the treatment of the men.

Reading your paper again I should say that the one object to be cultivated is to impress on your men that they belong to a regiment, not a battalion; that they are supplied on this system with drafts, and that this is their family.

We are able at home to find plenty of recruits. Your part is to keep what every foreigner regards as the splendid force which is wholly in your charge.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

OOTACAMUND, April 13, 1884.

I was very glad to receive your letter of the 29th of January last, and to hear that you agree with so much that

I have urged on Free-trade in the Army. From the annexed statement,<sup>1</sup> showing the standard height for infantry during the last fourteen years, you will see that the figures I have given are correct, and that the height has fluctuated between 5 ft. 8 in. in 1870 to 5 ft. 4 in. in 1884.

I should very much like to have access to the papers on the subject of the Army to which you refer in your letter.

I am not Utopian enough to suppose that we can ever have a perfect army, but I believe that by studying the peculiarities of soldiers we can have a thoroughly efficient one, and that, too, without any great increase to the Army Estimates.

How admirably General Graham seems to have managed at El Teb and Tamai. I only hope that Gordon will be as successful at Khartoum; but he has undertaken a most difficult task, and one cannot help feeling anxious about him.

Lady Roberts goes home in time for the summer holidays, when she hopes to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Childers and you. Our united kind regards to all your party.

On a question which is constantly being discussed at the present time, namely, the degree to which the Ministers responsible for the Army and Navy should, or should not, be obliged to submit to Parliament the opinions of their chief professional advisers, Mr. Childers has left behind a Memorandum drawn up in 1888. He did not think that

<sup>1</sup> STANDARD OF HEIGHT FOR INFANTRY.

		FT. IN.
General Order	8 of 1870 . . . . .	5 8 and upwards
"	59 of 1870 . . . . .	5 6
"	74 of 1870 . . . . .	5 5½ or 5 ft. 6 in.
"	47 of 1871 . . . . .	5 5
"	95 of 1872 . . . . .	ditto
"	79 of 1873 . . . . .	5 4½
"	78 of 1876 . . . . .	ditto
"	60 of 1877 . . . . .	5 5
"	110 of 1878 . . . . .	5 6
"	58 of 1879 . . . . .	5 5
"	118 of 1879 . . . . .	5 6
"	69 of 1880 . . . . .	5 5
"	81 of 1881 . . . . .	5 4

there was any practical difference between the responsibility of the Secretary of State and of the First Lord under the present system.

As long as Parliament is the ultimate judge (he wrote), a responsible Minister must be the person to submit for its approval professional decisions. Professional experts do not always agree, and in the end Parliament and the Minister must form the best judgment they can ; the first as to the system under which such experts should be selected ; the second, as to the persons to be selected, and as to decisions upon often conflicting recommendations. I cannot conceive anything worse than that Parliament should be *directly* advised by experts. Professional advisers and professional heads of Departments are now responsible—

- (1) For their advice itself ;
- (2) For seeing that it is placed on record ;
- (3) For insisting on its rejection, if they think it vital, that they should be relieved of responsibility, and even of office.

In my opinion, the chief professional advisers of the Minister should be entitled to require that their recommendations be submitted to the Cabinet. I think also that from some professional heads of Departments, and on certain subjects, annual Reports might, with advantage, be laid before Parliament, if the Minister and the public are of opinion that no public injury would result. But the general publication of professional recommendations by public servants, when not adopted, or when overruled by the Cabinet, might be most mischievous.

I think that the minute financial control now exercised over Military and Naval expenditure is in many cases unnecessary. More power should be given to officers in high command to incur or allow expenditure, with proper limits in time of peace ; such power already exists to a far greater extent in time of war.

I would suggest that the general Administrative and Executive business of the Army and Navy respectively should be conducted by a Military and a Naval officer of high rank, under the supreme authority of a Parliamentary Minister ; and that these advisers of the Minister should be entitled to require that their recommendations be submitted to the Cabinet, if overruled by the Minister.

## CHAPTER XII.

TEL-EL-KEBIR.

1882.

The Crisis in Egypt—Bombardment of Alexandria—France stands aside—Seizure of the Suez Canal—Tel-el-Kebir—Offer of G.C.B.—The Institution of the “ Royal Red Cross ”—Mr. Childers and the Duke of Cambridge—Leaves the War Office.

DURING the latter half of 1881 the attention of the Government had been from time to time directed to affairs in Egypt, and especially to the mutinous state of the Khedive’s army; in June of that year the Duke of Cambridge had written to Mr. Childers on the subject of an official despatch from Cairo as follows:—

“ This (Foreign Office) despatch, I think, gives an alarming account of the state of feeling in the Egyptian army, and the mode in which it is being dealt with by the authorities. It seems to me the time has arrived for taking this matter up very firmly, or otherwise I should fear mischief might result. Would you speak to Lord Granville about it, as regards giving special instructions to the British Commissioner and Consular Agent as to how they should act under the circumstances? ”

Mr. Childers sent the Duke of Cambridge’s note on to Lord Granville, saying he entirely concurred in it. Lord Granville replied that the Consular Agent could not advise any particular action at that moment; and it was not until the 6th of January following (six months after the Commander-in-Chief’s note) that the “ Identic Declaration ”

from France and England was presented. This "Dual Note," as it was called, practically guaranteed the maintenance of the Khedive on his throne.

On the 6th of February Sir Beauchamp Seymour, still in command of the Mediterranean Fleet, writes, predicting the beginning of the end in Cairo, and saying that he is "holding on the slack" meanwhile.

*From Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour.*

ADMIRALTY HOUSE, MALTA, February 6, 1882.

I was very glad indeed to see your well-known handwriting again, and to hear that there is a possibility of our meeting during the year. . . .

I do trust that when my successor is named they will hit upon a man whom the service and the country would appreciate. . . . John Hay or Commerell would be appreciated. . . . Hood would do very well. However, I won't bother you with my lucubrations on this subject.

I trust, for the sake of the country, that we shall not go to war; we have not the guns nor the men. Here in this harbour are some of the new six-inch B.L.R. Armstrong guns of the latest pattern, with all the improvements, but they are on board a Spanish, not an English ship of war. The Italians are able to afford new guns and to build docks, the Spanish to purchase one-hundred-ton sheers or cranes, but England is so impoverished that she cannot even commence what is urgently wanted at Malta—a second dock, though every one acknowledges the necessity of it. I rather think Mr. W. H. Smith<sup>1</sup> will have a word to say on this subject in the House before long.

I hear that the recruits recently sent out (we have got nearly seven hundred and fifty by the *Jumna*) are of a better stamp than they were two years ago. They certainly look it. You know, too, the effect a mild climate has on our men, and will comprehend how it is that the 75th and 96th, who were terrible when they arrived, have really become very decent-looking now; if they can only be kept together long enough they will do very well.

We have got a much finer lot of men sent to us, too, within the last three months than were going when the

<sup>1</sup> Who had been First Lord of the Admiralty during the end of the Beaconsfield Government.

*Alexandra* was re-commissioned, though the *Superb*, which left England in December, 1880, was splendidly manned. . . .

I continue to hear pretty often from our old friends. Wharncliffe is not exactly what one may call contented with the state of affairs, and whatever is to be said against the Government he is pretty certain to tell me. The latest story is that ten batteries of artillery are to be reduced! I earnestly pray that such may not be the case. What a time to think of such a reduction! with Ireland in a blaze and Egypt simmering.

I trust that Andrew Clarke may get whatever he would most wish, for I shall never forget what the Navy owes to him under you. When one thinks of past days I often wonder what would have been the result if you had appointed a man, with the head he has, Secretary to the Admiralty when Romaine<sup>1</sup> left. You remember that he wanted the situation!

I am now "holding on the slack" here, waiting to see what Egypt may bring forth. I have heard of the Cherif party being out of office, and I fully expect that this will be the commencement *de la fin*. I shall have *Alexandra*, *Superb*, and *Inflexible* ready to take down there at the first intimation I may have from the Admiralty that my services are required, and I should probably go to Alexandria in the *Iris*.

Altogether, I do not imagine that 1882 will be a quiet year for us wherever we may be. The mess the Austrians are in in the Herzegovina and in the Bocche di Cattaro is utterly and entirely through their own fault, and I have predicted it ever since August last.

I know very well what a glutton for work you are, but even I did not give you credit for having done so much as you have in twenty-one months of office. You have achieved and have deserved success.

You are fond of hearing the latest news. Send me the enclosed back after you have read it, as it is of importance to me.<sup>2</sup>

We are very civil to the Italians here, so they have been obliged to be courteous to Jack Fisher.

Pray remember me most kindly to Mrs. and Miss

<sup>1</sup> Mr. William G. Romaine.

<sup>2</sup> A letter from Captain (now Admiral Sir John) Fisher, referred to in the reply.

Childers. I am so very glad to hear of your R.E. and R.A. boys. I never forget old friends, especially those who have done for me what you have.

*To Sir B. Seymour.*

February 21, 1882.

I was very glad to receive your most interesting letter, and I write at once to return Fisher's letter, the information in which about torpedoes is most valuable. I have great difficulties in the War Office on this subject. I have so many fights to make against incompetent appointments, that I am obliged to yield sometimes.

Things went from bad to worse in Egypt during the spring of 1882. On the 20th of May the English and French fleets entered Alexandria harbour, and the Channel squadron was ordered to the Mediterranean.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

GLoucester House, HYDE PARK, W., June 16, 1882.

I am, of course, quite in the dark as to what the Government views or plans as regards Egypt may be, but I see the Channel Fleet has been ordered on to Malta from Gibraltar. I presume that it has occurred to you that some landing of troops may become necessary. To effect this some sort of preparation should surely be made, but I have not been called upon to propose or suggest anything. I am only putting this forward, as possibly out there great would be the hurry and confusion if suddenly called upon to act without any sort of plan upon which action should be based.

I was greatly pleased yesterday with the yeomanry regiment I inspected at Lichfield, as also with the three militia battalions which have only been out for training for a week as yet.

*To H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

117, PICCADILLY,<sup>1</sup> June 16, 1882.

The Cabinet met yesterday evening about Egypt, and one of the matters which was discussed was the propriety

<sup>1</sup> The lease of 17, Princes Gardens had now expired, and in the

of making some preparation for the possible contingency of having to send a British force *via* the Mediterranean to Egypt. The fear, however, is that if it oozed out that any preparations were being made, another outburst of violence might take place; and this is at the present moment apprehended as the consequence of the despatch of the Channel Fleet from Gibraltar.

But it was my intention to-day to make some most confidential inquiries as to the steps which would have to be taken, should Government decide to send any troops; and if your Royal Highness could be at the office at one (the House meets at two, and I have several questions to answer) we could make some inquiries. They should be of the most secret character, but I will warn Wolseley and Adye.

I am very glad, sir, that your visit to Lichfield was so satisfactory.

*From Viscount Halifax.*

*July 2, 1882.*

Do you remember that you and I, having agreed upon some sort of vigorous action before the single-handed intervention of Russia, found it impossible to rouse Gladstone and Granville to a proper sense of the emergency?<sup>1</sup>

I now, as then, an outsider, am for a little more vigour in Egypt. It is essential to maintain the Suez Canal free of interruption. We may protect the ends, but only the god of Egypt can protect the whole line, or the Sweet Water Canals.

Therefore an efficient Government in Egypt is indispensable for us.

Why not land twenty or thirty thousand men in Egypt with a Turkish force; occupy Alexandria, let them go to Cairo; hang Arabi, and re-establish the happy state which has prevailed till quite lately—safety to Europeans and to the canals?

spring of 1882 Mr. Childers moved to 117, Piccadilly. His study, which was high up, looked over the Green Park; he was now within a short walk from the War Office. The house is at the corner of Down Street, Gloucester House being at the corresponding corner of Park Lane, the next street.

<sup>1</sup> In 1870 Lord Halifax had joined the Gladstone Ministry as Lord Privy Seal.

It is pleasant to read a letter like the following, written by one who, though a political opponent, was a personal friend ; and who, with every temptation to make political capital out of the difficulties of the situation, refused to hamper the Government in a national emergency.

*From Sir Stafford Northcote.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS, July 4, 1882.

DEAR CHILDERS,—I have been asked to put a question about the rifled guns with which the forts at Alexandria are being armed, and the other preparations which Arabi is making, and which have impressed a highly competent naval authority with some alarm for the safety of our ships.

I have declined to put the question, as it seems unwise to be showing nervousness ; but I just send this line to say I trust the Government are alive to the dangers of the position.

Yours,  
STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.

On the 11th of July the British Fleet bombarded Alexandria, and from this time forward the military authorities were in constant consultation as to the plan to be adopted should the Government decide on an expedition to Egypt. On the 3rd of July Sir Garnet Wolseley submitted for Mr. Childers's information a plan of campaign in the event of an advance on Cairo being determined on ; in which he actually named the spot ("Tel-el-Kebir") where resistance would probably be offered.

But motives of policy delayed the decision of the Government, and the Cabinet were divided as to the necessity for doing more than merely protecting the Suez Canal. The Admiralty strenuously adhered to the idea that this policy could be carried out by the Navy alone, and the utmost that Mr. Childers could obtain was the despatch of two battalions of infantry and one company of Engineers from Malta to Cyprus. Consequently, when

the bombardment of Alexandria took place on the 11th of July, there was no force except some marines available to be landed (the troops from Malta did not arrive till the 17th), and no further steps had been decided on.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

*July 13, 1882.*

From what I hear from Sir Garnet Wolseley, it is intended to hold a meeting at twelve to-morrow to discuss with the Admiralty officials the propriety of some plan by which Ismailia and the Suez Canal are to be held by the Fleet and the two battalions at present awaiting orders at Cyprus, together with all available men that could be landed from the Fleet. As I have not heard the full details of such an operation, I am, of course, unable to give any very decided opinion upon it, but, upon conferring with the Adjutant-General, I am most decidedly of the same opinion as Sir Garnet Wolseley, that such an operation, unless immediately backed by a body of troops amounting at least to fifteen thousand men, would not only be most hazardous, but really quite unjustifiable by all the rules of war. The moment our troops take up a position on shore such operation can only be looked upon as one of direct hostility, and we must be prepared to meet it as such, even though the object of the Government may only amount to the protection and keeping open of the Suez Canal. That is the view which we as a Government or nation may be disposed to take of it, but the countries, and especially the country most interested, which would be Egypt, would certainly form a very different opinion, and for this it is absolutely necessary to be in all respects prepared. To my mind, therefore, and speaking in a military sense, I feel assured that we ought not to be a party to such a proposal, and I can advise no other course to be adopted than that originally contemplated, the occupation of Port Said and Ismailia and Suez by the small force suggested, to be eventually followed by large reinforcements, to bring up the army to be employed in the field to at least fifteen thousand men from home and the Mediterranean and five thousand men from the side of Suez and India.

I think it best that I should at once communicate

to you this my opinion, so as to prepare you for what the Adjutant-General and myself will say at the meeting to take place to-morrow.

But Mr. Gladstone adhered to his dictum that, although we had bombarded Alexandria, we were not at war ; and on the 15th of July he wrote begging Mr. Childers to allow the troops before mentioned (who by the 17th had arrived at Alexandria under the command of Sir Archibald Alison) to be placed under the command of the naval authorities as a means of carrying out the policy of police, so as to avoid even the semblance of invasion and the consequent suspicions and serious difficulties which would arise if we landed a regular army under military commanders. Mr. Gladstone was under the impression that Mr. Childers had done this in the case of Ireland for purposes of order, and that in the present case the order of the world was involved.

To this appeal Mr. Childers replied :—

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

Your letter suggests to my mind that you do not wish Alison to land at all, and you say that I allowed soldiers (as you understand) to be used under civil authority in Ireland for purposes of police. But the fact is that we refused categorically and (as it turns out) wisely to do what Cowper<sup>1</sup> and Spencer<sup>2</sup> proposed as to putting the soldiers for purposes of police under the civil authority in Ireland. They are under military officers, who are instructed to comply with the requisitions of the civil power.

The question is not with me in the least one of etiquette or professional prejudice. This is one of *law*. Soldiers under the Army Act can only obey a military officer on shore. They could not be tried for breach of discipline, and they might be liable to be tried for murder, if they obeyed any one else. It is therefore most important to comply with the *law*. Merely calling a particular

<sup>1</sup> Lord-Lieutenant, 1880-1882.

<sup>2</sup> Lord-Lieutenant 1882-1885.

operation police duty would not alter the legal position of a soldier.

I quite agree with Northbrook that no difficulty is likely to arise between B. Seymour and Alison, but after what you have written I have asked my military advisers and the Judge-Advocate-General<sup>1</sup> to meet me this evening. The force with Alison cannot well reach Alexandria before to-night or to-morrow morning, and no time will have been lost.

P.S.—I send you a memorandum by the Duke of Cambridge. This is undoubtedly the strict military view of the present law.

*Memorandum from H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge.*

July 7, 1882.

As the result of our deliberations this morning it has been decided to direct the troops on board the Channel squadron, and under the command of Major-General Sir Archibald Alison, to proceed to Alexandria, with a view to strengthen the hands of Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour in restoring order in that place.

Hitherto the operations that have taken place have been entirely naval. It is now desired to restore order on shore in the abandoned and seriously damaged city of Alexandria.

To effect this object Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour has been obliged to land all his available seamen and marines. There is danger that this force is not sufficient for the object to be attained. Hence the demand for these troops.

It becomes absolutely necessary to define very clearly, under these circumstances, the relative position of the Admiral and General. This can only be effected in the following manner, by considering the Admiral as the officer entrusted with the views and objects of her Majesty's Government, and, as such, empowered to call upon the General for his assistance in carrying out the work to be done. Sir Beauchamp Seymour would therefore have to consult with Sir Archibald Alison in regard to any land operations he would wish the latter to undertake, and a free interchange of views would then take place between these officers.

<sup>1</sup> Right Hon. Sir George Osborne Morgan, M.P., Judge Advocate-General, 1880-85; Under-Secretary for the Colonies, 1886. Died, 1897.

Should the military force be landed, the General, or senior military officer, would at once take command of all the force on shore, including blue jackets and marines of the fleet, and would from that moment become solely responsible for the conduct of the operation, which, from the time of landing, would have passed under his exclusive charge and control.

*From the Queen.*

WINDSOR CASTLE, July 10, 1882.

As the last telegrams from Egypt lead the Queen to fear that hostilities may break out at any moment, she wishes to learn from Mr. Childers what force it is intended to send to the East in such an event, and whom he contemplates recommending for the chief command. The Queen is aware of the two battalions going, as he has already explained to her, and of Sir A. Alison's mission. But it will be necessary that other troops should be in readiness to start at short notice, and the Queen would be glad to hear what regiments are selected for this duty.

The chief command must, of course, be conferred on one of the tried officers, assisted by others who have recently been in active service. The Queen wishes to know whom Mr. Childers had thought of, so that she may have time for consideration before being asked for her final decision.

Is the transport in an effective state, and have we sufficient horses for performing the duties that will be expected of this branch, if an expedition starts?

The Queen wishes to be fully informed of each step as matters proceed, and to learn confidentially the object and nature of any movements towards the East.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE, July 10, 1882.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Majesty's letter of this date, and hastens to reply to the questions which your Majesty has addressed to him. The exact force to be sent to the East, in the event of an expedition being sent out by this country, will depend upon the nature of the operations in which we may be engaged; for instance, whether the object of an expedition would be the occupation and protection of the Suez Canal,

or the occupation of Alexandria and Cairo (and, indeed, the occupation of Cairo might be the result of either movement) ; and, again, whether the expedition and occupation of any part of Egypt were undertaken by this country alone or in conjunction with an ally or allies. The contingency, however, for which Mr. Childers is preparing is that we may have to send to Egypt a force consisting of two divisions of infantry, a brigade of cavalry, forty-eight guns, and a small siege train.

Should it be determined by your Majesty's Government to send this or a less force, the preliminaries are so far advanced that it could be landed in Egypt in from four to five weeks from the date of mobilization. It would be desirable to call out from eight to ten thousand men of the 1st Class Army Reserve, and all the preparations for this have been made. It would also be desirable to retain for an additional four weeks all the militia battalions in training at the time of mobilization ; and this would add about ten thousand men under arms in England till September.

Mr. Childers has made the fullest arrangements for meeting all claims for regimental transport, and to a certain extent for general transport, including the raising of a transport corps in Cyprus.

The force, when it moves, will also have the necessary railway plant to utilize the lines of railways along which it may have to move.

Mr. Childers is able to state to your Majesty that for these purposes all the steps have been taken which should be adopted before the actual decision of your Majesty's Government as to sending out an expeditionary force is arrived at.

Mr. Childers encloses a list of the regiments and battalions, the commanding officers of which have been confidentially warned.

Mr. Childers has not yet discussed with H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge, or mentioned to the Cabinet, the names of the general officers to be submitted to your Majesty, for the chief and other commands. He does not think that he should do this until the nature of the expedition and the strength of the force have been settled.

Day by day it became more evident how futile was the idea that the Navy could settle the Egyptian question,

and at last Mr. Childers determined to bring matters to a crisis, and wrote to the Foreign Secretary, pointing out how very necessary it had now become that a well arranged plan should be approved for an immediate occupation of part of Egypt.

As the result, a Cabinet was summoned for the following day (20th), at which it was decided to despatch an expedition to Cairo, and steps were at once taken for calling out a portion of the reserve.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE, *July 20, 1882.*

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to inform your Majesty that at the Cabinet to-day it was decided to advise your Majesty to authorize the despatch of an expeditionary force to the Mediterranean, to consist of two complete divisions, that is to say, between fifteen and sixteen thousand infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with the usual proportion of other arms. Of the force, five line battalions will relieve other battalions now at Malta and Gibraltar, which have been reckoned under recent engagements to belong to the 1st Army Corps, and the other battalions will be strengthened by the transfer to the dépôt of the recruits and the addition of more men from the 1st Class Army Reserve. In this manner the whole force will consist of men fit for active service, and this will have been effected without calling for volunteers from other regiments, or the enforcement of the militia reserve. The total number of the 1st Class Army Reserve men who joined since the beginning of 1881 is above ten thousand, and these will be the only reserve men called out for the present. There will remain available in the reserve about eighteen thousand men besides the whole of the militia reserve.

It is also proposed to extend the period of training of the militia battalions, now out for training, for a period not exceeding (for the whole training) fifty-six days. This will add about ten thousand men to the militia out for training until the middle of September. The expeditionary force will call at Gibraltar for any change of orders, but their present destination will be Malta and Cyprus,

where they will be available for operations in any part of Egypt.

Mr. Childers humbly submits to your Majesty that the chief command of the force be given to Lieutenant-General Sir G. Wolseley, G.C.B., and that Lieutenant-General Sir J. Adye, K.C.B., be chief of the staff, with a dormant commission to succeed Sir G. Wolseley in the event of the latter becoming incapacitated.

*Telegram from Sir H. Ponsonby, Osborne, to Right Hon. H. Childers, War Office.*

July 21, 1882.

The Queen sanctions the two appointments submitted by you last night.

*From the Queen.*

OSBORNE, July 22, 1882.

The Queen has just received Mr. Childers's submission of officers' names to command the expeditionary force, viz., General Willis and Sir E. J. Hamley to command divisions, her son H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Sir A. Alison, Sir E. Wood, and General Graham to command brigades.

The Queen concludes the Guards will go to Malta in the first instance? She trusts transports, supplies, and a large hospital corps, with all that is required for the nursing and comfort of sick and wounded, will be thought of and provided for. Much as the Queen rejoices to see the rapidity with which the expedition is to be sent, she would strongly warn sending them out before all that is required is ready.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE, July 22, 1882.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to submit that Major-General William Earle, C.S.I., be appointed to take charge of the communications in connection with the force about to go to the Mediterranean, and Major-General Drury Lowe, C.B., to command the cavalry brigade. Mr. Childers is glad to be able to assure your Majesty that every care has been taken to procure and ship the necessary supplies, especially in connection with the hospitals. He will have prepared

and send to your Majesty a *précis* of the arrangements in this respect which have been approved. Mr. Childers is very conscious of the impolicy of sending out troops in advance of the necessary supplies, and during the last three weeks his daily attention has been given to this subject.

The climate of Egypt requires that every precaution should be taken against the consequences of heat, and against ophthalmia; and your Majesty's troops will be protected to the fullest extent possible.

*To the Queen.*

WAR OFFICE, July 28, 1882.

Mr. Childers, with his humble duty to your Majesty, has the honour to transmit a copy of the regulations for the guidance of the editors and correspondents of newspapers, when the latter are with an army in the field, which have been revised for use in the approaching campaign.

Mr. Childers hopes that this information will meet the wishes expressed by your Majesty in writing to Lord Granville on the 26th instant.

Mr. Childers also forwards to your Majesty a draft of the General Order on the subject of punishments for breaches of discipline in the field, which will be published by Sir Garnet Wolseley on the landing of the Army in Egypt.

The status of a newspaper correspondent in the field had up to this time never been very clearly defined. In this campaign for the first time the appointment of a Press Censor was officially recognized, and Colonel (now Lord) Methuen was nominated to the office, which was combined with the staff appointment of Camp Commandant at Head Quarters.

On the 27th of July a vote of credit for £2,300,000 was passed by the House of Commons, and it now remained to be seen whether France would go hand in hand with England or no. On this decision hung the fate of Egypt, and the future relations between England and France. "The President of the Republic and Minister of

War," wrote an *attaché* in Paris, "are strongly opposed to the expedition, the latter giving as his reason that his troops are neither physically nor morally fit for the work, and, further, that he is afraid he would lose half his men from sickness at this time of year."

Five days afterwards the French Government failed to obtain the vote they proposed. M. de Freycinet resigned, and England was left with a free hand to deal with Egypt.

On the 29th of July Sir Garnet Wolseley received information which led him to think that the Government contemplated an immediate move on Ismailia, and, fearing this would disclose our plans, wrote:—

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, July 29, 1882.

Sir J. Adye tells me it was decided to-day to take immediate possession of Ismailia. This is a serious step to take at present, and must certainly influence our future military operations to a great extent, and very injuriously. I do not know the reasons that have induced the Cabinet to resolve upon this move, but I do know the manner in which it will affect the campaign—it must render future military operations much more difficult, and might have a very disastrous effect upon them. I think I should therefore state my views for what they are worth, in order that the Cabinet may be made aware of the military aspect of this matter.

I understand that the force available for the occupation of Ismailia is only about two thousand men all told. If Arabi were a good soldier he might easily force them to re-embark, but there is a strong element of danger in the operation, whether Arabi be or be not an able man. Looking at the proposed move from an exclusively military point of view, it is an unwise one, but, looking at it in connection with our projected advance from Ismailia upon Cairo, it is, in my humble opinion, a most fatal mistake. There are good grounds for believing that Arabi is under the impression that our operations upon Cairo will be from Alexandria; and it is very important that he should

remain of that opinion. The day you occupy Ismailia you show your hand, and he will at once make every arrangement for meeting you upon the Ismailia-Cairo line. To take your enemy into your confidence is not a wise act.

The worst side of the question is, however, that in connection with the fresh-water arrangements. The two thousand men whom we can now send to Ismailia may, or may not, be able to hold their own there, but they certainly cannot hold the Canal locks to the west and south of that place. As soon as we obligingly tell Arabi our plan of campaign, he will cut the Sweet Water Canal, that supplies not only Ismailia but Port Said and Suez with drinking water. Are we prepared to furnish the inhabitants of those places with water? If not, surely our occupation of Ismailia will not only be unwise in a military sense, but cruel, and wantonly cruel, to the civil population of those stations. If we adopt a line of conduct that will result in depriving these people of water, surely we are bound to arrange for this want. We shall have the utmost difficulty in supplying our troops with fresh water at Ismailia when the whole force is collected there, but if we should also have to find water for the population of Port Said and Suez, I don't see how it is to be done.

At present Arabi is under the impression that we intend moving direct from Alexandria upon Cairo, and he seems to regard the action of our ships of war, when acting in concert with those of France upon the Canal, as merely precautionary measures. He has not, therefore, interfered as yet with the Fresh Water Canal, but the day when we land a force at Ismailia he will naturally cut off that supply.

We ought not to land at Ismailia until we have troops enough to push on from Ismailia to Lake Moomah on the west, and about ten miles along the Canal in a southerly direction towards Suez.

With these points in our possession, we should be sure of enough fresh water, after landing at Ismailia, until we were ready to begin our march upon Cairo. The immediate occupation of Ismailia must seriously affect the intended campaign. I hope, therefore, it may not be too late to stop it, which I earnestly beg may be done.

As far as I am aware, this move has been decided upon without obtaining any military opinion, and without consultation with any military officer. I hope I may be pardoned for saying that it is, I think, very dangerous to

order military movements without obtaining military advice.

I regard this matter as so serious that I hope you may be able to let the other members of the Cabinet know my views about it. I may add that I believe Sir John Adye, who is to be second in command of the force, shares my views upon this subject.

Mr. Childers answered that no such decision was arrived at, but only an inquiry settled by Lord Northbrook and himself as to the number of troops which could be spared for the Canal after battalions had arrived from Malta and Gibraltar.

France and Turkey having withdrawn, England was now alone in the field. Europe looked on, and wondered how she would play her part. Public excitement was great ; some apprehension was expressed at our limited force, and many were the letters of advice, and some of warning, which Mr. Childers received. To these he had seldom time to reply.

*From Sir Edward Sullivan.*

TETWORTH, SUNNINGHILL, August 30, 1882.

Don't be alarmed that I am going to force a correspondence on you! *Pray understand I do not look for a reply.*

You know, better than I do, that you are playing *grand jeu*, that this is not one of our ordinary Colonial or frontier wars : *Il s'agit de l'Empire!* Your stake in the game is nothing less than our Indian Empire. Rapid and complete success will strengthen it ; delay or failure will greatly imperil it.

In the face of Europe, in defiance of some Powers, we have undertaken to subdue Arabi ; and if we are to do it, without incurring great danger, we *must* do it rapidly. Let the idea once become current at home and abroad that there is a hitch, either that from climate, or from want of men, we cannot do the work *quickly*, and the whole situation will change like magic. The opposition you will have to face at home and abroad will be immense, and will immensely increase your responsibilities. With our

enormous stake in the game, so enormous that the loss of the game threatens ruin, it is worth any exertion, any cost, to achieve rapid success. There can be no doubt that it is far safer, and will in the end be much cheaper, to have ten thousand men too many than one man too few.

If the employment of thirty thousand native troops enables us to finish the campaign speedily, and to save British lives, the British public will never recur to the puerile question, "Who pays them?" Indeed, great honour would accrue to the Government who employs them; but if the campaign is prolonged, for want of a sufficient number of troops who can stand the climate, and if the British loss from exposure to climate is very great (which is absolutely certain, if they have to work and expose themselves during the next six weeks as they have during the last six days), you will have to face the outcry, "Why, with two hundred thousand native troops at your disposal, did you not send more to Egypt?"

I know there have been great, and apparently successful, efforts to prevent the real fighting races of India, Pathans, Sikhs, and Ghoorkas, being sent to Egypt, on the score that they have already had three or four years' continuous campaigning in Afghanistan. I think this has been a very great mistake. Independently of saving British lives, and giving the Army a power of rapid locomotion impossible with British infantry or cavalry in that climate, I hold that it is a splendid opportunity for England to show Europe the great military resources of her Indian empire; thirty thousand Indian troops would do this; six thousand ordinary Bombay and Madras troops may have the contrary effect.

In a climate even more trying to English troops than India itself, our Army should, I believe, have been organized in the proportion general in Indian campaigns, viz. *three* native soldiers to *one* British.

*Geographically*, Egypt is the one spot in the whole world where Great Britain should be able to put forth the greatest military strength. With an army of one hundred thousand men in England, and two hundred thousand men in India, about equidistant from the seat of war, and the ocean highway open on both sides, there should be no difficulty about numbers.

England is the only country in the world, except perhaps Russia, that has at command a large army able

to bear an Egyptian summer as well as the Egyptians themselves.

You know better than I do that the losses of the French in Tunis, from climate, have been frightful. I have been told by an officer who was some time in Marseilles, that the sights he saw there of sick men returning from Tunis were as bad as anything he saw in the Crimea.

The French *have*, or *have had*, as many as *ninety thousand* men in Tunis. The climate was never so trying as an Egyptian August and September, and there was no foe compared to Arabi, no regular army, no disciplined troops, no batteries of Krupp guns, no Remington rifles, no Italian or American officers. Of course Arabi may "cave in," and the whole country go at once for Teufik; but if Arabi *really holds out*, double our present force at least will be necessary to pacify the country. Six days' campaigning has established these facts: (1) That the Indian cavalry can march one hundred miles across the desert in *two* days, without suffering (the best English cavalry could not have done it in four days); (2) that sunstroke and bad water are *already* seriously affecting the efficiency of our troops; (3) that Arabi's position, operating on an inner circle, with a network of railways, virtually doubles the number of his men and guns, whilst Wolseley's position, acting from opposite points of an outer circle, virtually halves his men and guns.

Excuse me. I shall not trouble you again.

The despatch of the Expeditionary Force to Egypt, with its guns, stores, and necessaries, continued during August and September. Parliament adjourned on the 18th of August, but Mr. Childers continued in London, looking personally into everything he could. These labours in Pall Mall during the day, and in the House of Commons till late at night, were a great strain on a constitution at no time too robust. On Saturdays or Wednesdays, if there was no House sitting, he would take a long drive through Richmond Park, or to Hampstead or Sydenham, before returning to his house, to find a budget of telegrams from Alexandria or Ismailia.

The Queen, with her well-known solicitude for the

welfare of her Army, wrote many letters at this time to Mr. Childers to satisfy herself that all precautions were being taken for the health and comfort of the troops : one day alone brought seventeen letters from her Majesty, or her private secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

OSBORNE, August 10, 1882.

The Queen says that if at any time you have any private letters from officers which you think she could see, her Majesty would be glad to read them.

*To Sir H. Ponsonby.*

WAR OFFICE, August 11, 1882.

I will keep her Majesty well informed of all events in which she is likely to take special interest. Of course, working as we do, at this moment almost day and night, something may slip, but it will be by accident. I am telegraphing the news just received, that no movement will take place to the Canal for a few days, and that the generals and admirals think that any attack on the Aboukir forts should remain in abeyance.

*To Sir G. Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, August 18, 1882.

I was very glad to learn from your letter to Mrs. Childers written at sea before you reached Gibraltar, and from the letter you wrote to me from Malta, that you were quite yourself again.

You had altogether a slow passage to Alexandria, but it has given you time to think matters out at comparative leisure, and you have actually arrived in ample time for active operations. I think we have answered all your telegrams, and kept you informed of all matters of interest. It was a relief to me to know that you do not anticipate wanting another division. The men are available and the transport can be got ready in reasonable time ; but I do not know what we should do for ordinary garrison work in Great Britain, considering the heavy Irish demand, without embodying some militia battalions. But this we could not well do at the present moment, Parliament

having risen to-day until the 24th of October. It would have to be summoned, at the greatest possible inconvenience. But if nothing is wanted before about the middle of October, there will comparatively be no difficulty. Meanwhile, I have again telegraphed to you to-day as to the extent to which you require the dépôts to be kept up at Alexandria, Malta, and Cyprus, and you may rely on your requisitions being attended to without delay. I have told the Foreign Office that we do not want foreign attachés, and the Admiralty that we shall not ask for marine officers. About clothing, I shall keep the Committee open till you return, and I hope that the experience of this war will enable us to clothe all our men sensibly. We sent you at once your cheese, and I spoke to Lord Northbrook about whitewashing the transports. I am very glad you so thoroughly understand me as not to be sending me too many telegrams about your intentions. Let me know what you want, and on political matters you cannot tell me too much. I shall in the same way keep you fully informed of everything which can be of use to you.

But as to operations we place absolute confidence in you, as Lord Northbrook does in Beauchamp Seymour, and we only care to know your intentions when you require some political or other co-operation.

Reading between the lines of the newspaper telegrams, Lord Northbrook and I conclude that you are on your way to Port Said to-day, and that part of the Fleet and a small land-force will make a feigned attack on Aboukir to-morrow. If so, Sunday, the 29th, will probably bring us critical and decisive news. I see by the last telegrams that Nefiché is again occupied in force. We were very glad to see Lady Wolseley the day before she left town, looking extremely well.

The secret of the expedition was well kept, and it was not until the First Division (after a rendezvous at Alexandria) had started off, ostensibly to land at Aboukir and attack the forts there, that the real objective (Ismailia) was revealed.

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

ALEXANDRIA, August 19, 1882.

When the last post left, the day before yesterday, I had the Khedive with me; he returned my visit and sat on

talking and telling stories as if he intended staying all day. The result was that I had not time to write to you as I had intended, and was obliged to cut very short a letter I had begun early in the morning to the Duke. I asked H.R.H. to be good enough to tell you what I had written to him. I now enclose a copy of the enclosure which accompanied my letter, which I had had made for you. It tells its own story. No one is in the secret beyond the Admirals concerned, one Naval Captain, Adye, my Military Secretary, and myself. I am leaving General Hamley behind here, with such parts of the Second Division as have arrived. He and all the Generals believe we are to fight a general action in this neighbourhood to-morrow, and all the troops are in good fettle for what they think is to be their first brush with the enemy. So far so well. I think the secret has been tolerably well kept.

Yesterday we had bad news from the Canal: a French ship had run aground badly near Lake Timsah, close by Lesseps's head-quarters at Ismailia, which looks very suspicious. Five ships going south were consequently blocked in the Canal between that place and Port Said. I hope we may be able to "clear the line," however, before our troopships reach that locality to-morrow. The weak and dangerous part of the scheme we have agreed upon is the liability of our large transports to run aground, and that, if one does so, we may so block the Canal that we shall have to take to our small boats. The passage from Port Said to Ismailia will take from eight to ten hours, so the small naval force that lands in the early morning there to take possession of it will be a long and dangerous time without support. But the Navy were so clearly of opinion that it would be better to go up in the large ships than, as I had proposed, in small boats and lighters, etc., towed by tugs and gunboats, and so confident of being able to hold their own at Ismailia until I arrived with the leading brigade, that I at once gave way. My relations with Beauchamp Seymour are most cordial; the Captain<sup>1</sup> who is entrusted with all the transport work is an old friend of mine (his brother is my naval A.D.C.) so we get on together *à merveille*.

Lesseps is most antagonistic to us: he has publicly announced he, the great man, will with his own hand kill the first Englishman who dares to land at Ismailia.

<sup>1</sup> Captain (now Vice-Admiral Sir Harry) Rawson, R.N.

I am afraid that it will be so late when we reach that place, that if the enemy are in strong position at Nefiché Junction we shall have to postpone attacking him until Monday morning, if he remains there so long. It takes a long time, even under the most favourable circumstances (and they will not exist for us at Ismailia), to land a regiment of cavalry or a battery of artillery. If he stays at Nefiché after I have my two regiments of cavalry and two batteries of artillery ashore, I hope "to bag" whatever troops he may have there by cutting the line of railway in his rear with the cavalry.

We know nothing about the Turks, and Malet tells me he is in the same position. All my arrangements for Alexandria will hinge very much upon those made with the Porte. For some time I shall have to leave four battalions here; two of them will be those you have purposely added to the Army for garrison work; the other two I must take from the Second Division. In a little time, however, I presume our advance by Ismailia will draw off Arabi and the bulk of his troops from this neighbourhood, when I shall be able to hold Alexandria easily with the dépôt men and the two garrison regiments (the 2nd Manchester and 2nd Derby).

All reports go to show that Arabi means to fight at Tel-el-Kebir (about twenty-eight or thirty miles to the west of Ismailia). This is the place where I had always calculated upon his making a stand. It will be a piece of real good fortune if this turns out correct. At any rate, he has now a number of troops there. I am diffident in attempting to state numbers, for dear old . . . and those employed to collect information are such wild people when any estimate of the enemy's strength is called for, that it is difficult for me to give you any statement that would be worth your having. When one adds together the numbers said to be at the various places in Egypt under Arabi's command, the total is very nearly a hundred thousand men. My own humble opinion is, that he has from twenty to twenty-five thousand real soldiers, say from five to ten thousand Bedouins, and say ten thousand new levies. I believe my estimate is a most liberal one. Stone Pasha, however, assured me yesterday that Arabi certainly had fifty thousand old soldiers under arms, having recalled to the colours all the reserves and pensioners and discharged men. I feel that any men beyond those who belonged to the old army whom he may have with him,

will weaken rather than strengthen his position, and that whether he has a mob of thirty thousand or a hundred thousand men is really of very little consequence to us. With our two divisions and the Indian contingent, the whole of Egypt assembled at Tel-el-Kebir would be made short work of; please believe this if any croakers try to frighten the Government.

I am very glad you are organizing a Third Division; it will give a finish to the arrangements you have so wisely made for this war; but I have every confidence that we shall not want "any more men from England."<sup>1</sup>

I leave this at noon to-day in the *Salamis*; the fleet and transports carrying the First Division are now going out to the rendezvous outside the harbour, and when formed there sail in four Naval Divisions for Aboukir Bay, where they will anchor in imposing array. The small boats of the Fleet will go in at dark and open fire upon the beach, to attract as much attention as possible to that quarter. Naval etiquette prevents the Admiral from opening fire from his big guns upon the forts at very long range, as I wished him to do; but the Navy have some funny notion that if they open fire on a battery they are bound by some peculiar code of honour of their own to fight on until they silence it. I don't understand this reasoning, so I cannot therefore argue upon it. Sir Beauchamp and his officers are very glad to get off an attack upon the Aboukir forts, which all agree would have been a very serious nut to crack. To attack these forts, even had they been less difficult than now appears to be the case, would have been in my humble opinion a piece of foolish swagger that would lead to nothing beyond a useless expenditure of valuable ammunition, though possibly to very serious damage to several of our ships. The Navy are furious—and I think with great justice—as to the badness of the fuzes supplied to them from Woolwich. A considerable proportion of the shells they fired never burst at all. This is very discreditable to our manufacturing departments.

It is very possible that the Canal may be so blocked by our transports next Tuesday and Wednesday, that the mail steamer from India may not be able to get through. I am therefore sending this in a bag the Admiral is making up for the French packet that leaves Alexandria on Tuesday.

Please thank Mrs. Childers from me for her very kind

<sup>1</sup> *King Henry V.*, Act iv. sc. 3.

message about my wife contained in your last letter ; it will be very gracious of her if she will communicate to my wife any early news you may receive at any time of our doings out here.

Nine transports passed Malta on the 16th or 17th, so troops will come tumbling in here to-day, to-morrow, and the next day.

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

ISMALIA, August 26, 1882.

I have just received your kind letter of the 18th instant, and am very grateful for the confidence you repose in me. My telegram will, I hope, have placed you in possession of all our news here. The last few days have been so busy, and we are all working at such high pressure, that I have very little time for any letter writing. Circumstances have pushed me forward sooner than I had intended, and consequently the difficulty of feeding and forwarding camp equipment to the front has been very great ; indeed, as I said in my telegram yesterday, I should have found it next to impossible to have done what I have already accomplished, had not Sir B. Seymour helped me in every way with boats on the Fresh Water Canal. Nothing could be more cordial than the manner in which we work together.

As usual, transport has been our difficulty, and until we have an engine or two working on the line, I cannot move forward again. In addition to the difficulties which with an English army we always have to encounter from the fact that during peace we do not keep up any large transport fit for war, we have here to meet the difficulty arising from the total absence of roads of any sort or kind, and forcing us to move over a desert of deep sand, in which even our guns and their waggons stick fast every few hundred yards. However, difficulties are only created to be overcome, and every one works hard. When I think of what our Army was when we began work in the Crimea, and compare it with the army now here, one feels proud of having had something to do with the reforms which have been effected in it. Malet<sup>1</sup> is averse to withdrawing any large body of men from Alexandria. As far as the actual military position is concerned, I believe we might

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Malet, Agent and Consul-General in Egypt, afterwards Ambassador in Berlin.

safely leave that place with a garrison of only four battalions and some garrison artillery, but the political position must also be considered. I have consequently telegraphed to-day to Sir Edward Hamley, desiring him to confer with Malet, and obtain his opinion upon the following proposed military [disposition. To leave Wood and his brigade of three and a half battalions and the two garrison battalions (five and a half battalions in all), together with two garrison batteries of artillery and the battery of Maltese Fencibles, and such marines as the Admiral can land from the ships now there as the garrison of Alexandria for the time being. To bring on here the Third Brigade under Alison, Hamley coming here also. I have asked for Harman<sup>1</sup> to come out as commandant for Alexandria, as I looked forward to being able to bring on Wood by-and-by, when Arabi draws away the bulk of his army from the neighbourhood of Alexandria for the purpose of fighting us on the Ismailia-Zagazig line. From my experience of yesterday I can see that our infantry will have little to do during this war. The enemy will not allow us to approach them—except perhaps in front—near enough to use the infantry. In the affair of the last two days I don't think our infantry have fired in all one hundred rounds. Their works at Mahuta were well designed and very strong, but I shall always try to turn these great lines of works and take them in flank and rear. I don't think their infantry will allow us to get on their lines of retreat, but will bolt before our infantry can get at them. Our cavalry and artillery horses, having been used so soon after leaving their ships, are tolerably well pumped out, so I cannot use them again for some days. The enemy had opened the sluice gates near Maxemah (Masameh on map) railroad station before they retreated, but there is still plenty of water in the Canal. This evening I shall be in possession (I hope) of Kassassin Lock, and with that in my possession I feel no care about want of water until I reach the Delta. The enemy's plan is, not to cut the canals apparently, but to dam them. The dams he made at Mahuta and the place which we reached on the 24th instant were great works, remarkably well made, with great bundles of rushes, sandbags, and well-rammed earth and sand; to cut through them is heavy

<sup>1</sup> Major-General (afterwards Sir George) Harman, Military Secretary. Died 1892.

work. As long as he has a force at Tel-el-Kebir, or anywhere along this line, he must have the Canal for supplying his own men with water. I don't therefore think he will ever do worse to it than dam it at every place where he takes up a position. Our men have suffered from the heat and exertion of the last few days as much as our horses, and we have had many cases of sunstroke more or less serious. It is not so much the actual heat itself as the very strong glare from the sand, which strikes upward, and seems to burn one through and through. On the 24th instant, when I realized that the force in my front was being strongly reinforced by troops brought from the rear—I could see the smoke of each engine as it arrived with fresh troops from Tel-el-Kebir—nothing was left for me to do, but either to fall back or await reinforcements ; and whilst spending the day, being pounded all the time by the enemy's guns, I found it actually impossible to sit or lie down for more than a few minutes at a time, the sand was so burningly hot. It felt as if you might have cooked eggs upon it. General Willis was knocked up for a couple of hours during the day, the sun making him feel sick and faint ; I am afraid he is not very strong. The enemy's artillery fire was very good—fortunately they only fired common shell with percussion fuzes, which buried themselves so deep in the sand before bursting, that they did very little harm, although the practice was admirable. Had they had shrapnel shells, we should have suffered severely. The first shell they fired was fired, I should say, at the group of officers around me, as I stood on the sandhill where I had placed my two horse artillery guns. It passed a few feet over my head, and killed one of the horses just behind us. I reserved my artillery fire for a long time, hoping to induce the enemy to come on under the idea that I had no guns with me, so that I might have been able to give them a warm reception ; but although they came forward now and again in a deployed attack formation, their infantry would never give ours a chance of pegging into them.

The manner in which young Lieutenant Hickman, R.H.A., stuck to his two guns and served them from early morning until late in the afternoon was most creditable : his practice was very good, and must have done the enemy damage, although most of his guns were in deep entrenchments.

As I was coming back here yesterday afternoon I met

the first troop of the Indian cavalry that had been landed. I hope soon to have the three regiments landed, when I shall send them to the front, creating them a Cavalry Division of two brigades, the first brigade under Sir Baker Russell,<sup>1</sup> the second under the Brigadier that came with it from India; Major-General Drury Lowe to command the Division, with Lieutenant-Colonel H. Stewart as his Assistant-Adjutant-General.

Macpherson's appointment is a great mistake. He is a very old friend of mine, and I should very much indeed have liked having him in command of a brigade. He is only a colonel, yet all our brigades from England are commanded by major-generals. If the Indian troops were to have moved along a totally different line of operations from us, then his appointment would have been natural, but now he is but a fifth wheel, and I am puzzled how to employ him. I must not create his party into a Division, because, being only a colonel, it would be very hard upon old major-generals like Alison, who have only a brigade to command; and there is already a brigadier named to command the Infantry Brigade. The whole affair is thoroughly Indian. However, I think Macpherson such a good fellow, that I shall try and take him on with me. I wish the Indian Government had consulted the War Office before they made these unmilitary arrangements, which place me in a difficult and disagreeable position. Of course I could easily put him in command of some troops on the line of communications, but I am anxious that he should at least see one fight before doing so. Then the Indian Government have sent a ridiculous staff here, for the officers of which I cannot find employment, unless I disperse them individually. War is a serious business; its operations cannot be treated as one would autumn manœuvres, where the more men employed, the greater the instruction afforded to the army. However, these are all small matters. I don't expect to be in a position to make my final advance upon Tel-el-Kebir and Cairo before the end of the first week in September. My desire is to induce Arabi to come down with all his army to Tel-el-Kebir, so that I may be able to fight him before we reach the Delta. If he were wise, he would not fight in the desert, where I can manœuvre round him.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Baker Creed Russell, G.C.B., General Commanding Southern District since 1898.

*To Sir G. Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, *August 25, 1882.*

I congratulate you very heartily on the success of your movements to Ismailia, and on your arrangements being so perfect.

I suppose that it is possible that before I close this letter we may hear of an action near Ramses or Masameh, but I shall not expect anything decisive till you reach Tel-el-Kebir. As I said last week, I do not care much to know your intentions, unless by knowing them we can help you from here, or unless they involve political considerations.

I have been thinking a good deal of the garrison of Alexandria, when you bring away Hamley's division. I hope that you will not want more troops from England, as any considerable demand would involve our embodying some Militia. We could only do so by a Proclamation, involving the re-assembling of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> I think we might without this spare two battalions, but even this would be a little questionable, and the Militia battalions, which we have kept out for fifty-six days, will all have completed their training towards the end of September. India could supply more, but at the loss of a few days, and at much greater cost. We might anticipate a little the arrival at Gibraltar of the battalion from Halifax, and, at a pinch, let you draw a wing from Malta and Gibraltar each. Some of the papers suggest that you have not got enough artillery. These reports made some people fidgety, but I have reassured them, without noticing the newspapers. I hope this evening, after seeing Mr. Gladstone, to be able to tell you more as to the probabilities of Turkish co-operation. Personally, and from a War Office point of view, I should regret their joining us on any terms ; but the political feeling is rather the other way. Their co-operation would probably put an end to the anticipated conflict between Mahomedans and Christians in Syria, Asia Minor, and Crete, and there is a prevalent idea that Arabi also would give in. I hope to telegraph to you to-night the position as well as we can estimate it. I am also telegraphing to you about telegrams passing through Alexandria. I have reason to believe that the rebels send and receive a good deal of information there, and this must be stopped. I think you will find that we have complied with all your requirements, except as to Col. Arbuthnot, who could not be Commandant at

<sup>1</sup> Militia Act, 1882, s. 19, a consolidating Act just passed.

Alexandria, as both the commanding officers of the dépôts to be formed there would be his seniors. In consequence, his Royal Highness telegraphed to you yesterday that we thought a Major-General should command there, when the Second Division comes away, and asked you what you thought of Newdigate,<sup>1</sup> Hills,<sup>2</sup> Gipps,<sup>3</sup> and Harman.

Six p.m.—We have this moment received your report of the action yesterday, which is very satisfactory, considering especially the great disproportion of numbers. We shall publish all you have sent *en clair*.

I am very sorry for Melgund's<sup>4</sup> wound, but I hope it will not incapacitate him long.

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

ISMALIA, August 31, 1882.

We are getting on very well: our difficulty is our railway, as the engines from England have not yet arrived, and, at present, we have only one locomotive working on the line. To-morrow I shall have another, and by Sunday I hope to have three. Engines are liable to accidents, and it is common to count on fifty per cent. being in hospital. The embankment constructed by the enemy across the railroad was a great work, and has taken us some days to remove. The enemy had seven thousand men working at it and the dam across the Canal, which was at the same place—Tel-el-Mahsita. The enemy's attack upon Graham's advance post also interrupted our work during the 28th. I am quite satisfied with the progress made, knowing the difficulties we have had to encounter. Of course, if the engine and railroad plant from England had been here earlier, we might have been now in a more forward position. I have pushed on farther than I intended, and cannot now go farther on until I have collected at least thirty days' supplies for all my force at Kassassin Lock. What I am anxious to do is to avoid these little fights, which retard my work, and to reserve all my strength for a grand *coup* in about ten days' time. Before I left England I told every one I should not be able to do much before the 10th of September, and expected the 16th of

<sup>1</sup> Now Lieut.-General Sir Henry Newdigate, K.C.B.

<sup>2</sup> Now Major-General Sir James Hills-Johnes, K.C.B.

<sup>3</sup> Now Sir Reginald Ramsay Gipps, K.C.B.

<sup>4</sup> Now Earl of Minto and Governor-General of Canada.

September to be the date when I could bring the business to a final trial of arms. Our men stand the heat and privations far better than I had expected. Arabi is now working hard at a line of entrenchments in our front, and I am in great hopes that he may concentrate all his available strength there. I have just telegraphed to you about the Turks, proposing that they should land to the westward of Alexandria. I should prefer to have them here, to seeing them land at Aboukir. The forts there require large numbers of artillery to man them, all of whom would come here if driven from Aboukir. The artillery is the only good branch of the Egyptian army ; they stand to their guns well, whereas their infantry and cavalry will not face us, I am afraid. We shall have some heavy losses in our big fight when it comes off, but one cannot make omelettes without breaking eggs. Every one here is working very hard, and most anxious for our final move forward, but I cannot make it for some time. I shall want cavalry horses badly soon : we have lost a good number, and I have already telegraphed to you on this subject. I am now using every effort to enter into negotiations with the neighbouring Bedouin tribes, and am tolerably confident of success, but such negotiations march very slowly in Egypt—the people will not be hustled. To please the Navy, I have asked Seymour to form a Naval Brigade for shore work. I have ordered Hamley on here with the Highland Brigade. He was very anxious to attack the enemy near the Mex Lines before he embarked, but I would not allow him, as I want to husband all my strength for our *coup* here. I am very sorry indeed I cannot have Wood here also. Of course the newspapers will howl at our delay, and talk of our broken-down commissariat, etc., etc., but we cannot help that. The wounded are doing well, and the spirit of the army generally is all that could be wished. I have every confidence in our complete success when we do move.

ISMALIA, September 4, 1882.

What I have arranged with Macpherson is this. He did not like having his force called a brigade, as he had been—although only a colonel in the army—in command of a Division at Allahabad. His force will consist of the 1st Manchester, the Seaforth Highlanders, and two Native infantry battalions and the mountain battery of screw

guns, and he will be attached to the Second Division. This will give Hamley a good Division, although Wood is kept at Alexandria, and will somewhat save Macpherson's *amour propre*. I shall leave the head-quarters and wing of the 1st Sussex here as a garrison, using up one Native battalion to garrison Suez and Nefiché and the small posts between these two places. The 1st West Kent I shall break up along the posts between Nefiché and Kassassin Lock. I shall replace that battalion in Graham's Brigade by the battalion of Marines, and shall keep the small battalion of Marine Artillery unattached to work the enemy's guns in their works *when we take them*. Besides, I am told, the Marine Artillery and the Marine Light Infantry get on very badly together, and prefer being apart. I shall telegraph to you to-morrow, when I have learnt the exact details of what our loss has been in action and by disease since we landed, upon the subject of bringing on the dépôts intended for Alexandria direct to this place. I expect to have at least six hundred casualties in my action at Tel-el-Kebir, so that loss, added to the casualties I have already had, will make it very desirable that I should fill up my battalions as far as possible, immediately after the action. I think, therefore, it will be necessary to create a second dépôt as soon as possible, to be sent to Alexandria. I hope and trust we shall not require a man of it, but in war there is so much uncertainty that I do not think it would be safe to go on without a dépôt for each battalion and corps close under our lee, just as you have already arranged to do in the matter of horses. Whole new battalions sent out from England are not so effective as the old ones kept full.

It is much easier to feed, command, and administer ten thousand men in ten or twelve battalions, than if they were divided into twenty battalions: the greater the number of battalions the greater the amount of transport required. Until I have the locomotives from England working on the line, it will be impossible for me to say when I shall be able to make my first advance. As you may imagine, no one is anxious to move so much as I am, but I want to make my next action as decisive as possible; and that I can only do by having in front, before I move, enough provisions and ammunition to enable me to pursue after my action. If I merely go forward and defeat him and then halt to give him time to recuperate, he will merely go some ten or twenty miles farther back and

play the same game over again. After this next action I want to obtain possession of Zagazig, and other places, that will cut his forces in two, supposing I leave him any force at all, which I trust I may not. I am tolerably confident that if I succeed in my plans at Tel-el-Kebir, his army will break up in such a manner that he will not be able to get it together again. However, such trifles as a shower of rain have often ruined the most skilfully laid plans of attack, so uncertain is everything in war.

Things are going on as well as can be expected, and, if the people of England will only have a little patience, I am quite confident of the result. My force is not large enough to risk much in a country where all the inhabitants are hostile; and I think it would be criminal, as well as foolish, to run any great risk on the chance of gaining some flashy success which would be more apparent than real.

I am extremely obliged to you and very grateful for the manner in which you accede to all my requests, and indeed forestall my wants.

*To Sir G. Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, September 1, 1882.

You kept your secret wonderfully well, and evidently the movement to the Canal was hardly suspected at Port Said and Ismailia. So far all has gone pretty much as you anticipated, except that you are more forward than you thought you would be, and that Arabi has met you at a point more to the east. As to the attack on the Aboukir forts, I am entirely of your opinion from all we have heard.

The Naval reason for not opening fire when you made the feint was novel to me, but Sir Cooper Key confirmed it the other day, and said it was the etiquette of the Naval Service never to use their guns except against an enemy with guns, and that he once in a gun brig ran a chance of being severely handled by riflemen, because they had no guns with them, and he was not allowed to disperse them with a shot from his ship's guns.

I have looked into the fuze question, and I think that Sir F. Campbell<sup>1</sup> has a good answer. I will not trouble you with it now. I proceed to the important matters about which I have sat down to write to you.

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Frederick Campbell, Director of Artillery.

(1) As to your strength, both at Alexandria, and on the Canal, and the advance, although you have been very moderate in all your demands, yet I have felt bound to look forward and see what you could have if you want reinforcements. I imagine that you could have a considerable force from India. You yourself cut down what they originally offered, and, even with the additions since asked for, we are drawing less than their offer.

The two objections are time and money. But you know now how long it takes to get Indian troops to you ; and, as to sea transport, we shall probably be able to bring what is wanted with the ships already chartered from this side at a less cost than under Indian charters. But setting aside India, I fear we could not possibly send you more than we have offered to do in yesterday's telegram, without calling Parliament together ; and you know as well as I do what that means. Our offer, however, was for no inconsiderable force ; for, besides your two complete Divisions, you would have five battalions for your garrison duty, and dépôts at Alexandria for drafts kept up to about three thousand men. I should imagine that these seven thousand men, with the Marines and the garrison batteries, would hold Alexandria, when they have all reached you, towards the end of this month, and you will then have in the field your two Divisions complete and the Indian contingent. However, we must spare nothing to complete the task we have undertaken, and, if you tell us that it is necessary, Parliament must be called together and some Militia enrolled, and more Reserves called out. I am sorry to say that the news from Ireland to-day does not diminish our troubles, as the Dublin police are in a state of semi-mutiny.

(2) There is a good deal of anxiety felt by the public about your transport, and this has culminated to-day in a savage article in the *Times*, which, considering the friendliness of the paper generally, has surprised me. I suppose that the refusal to allow the mules to leave Turkish harbours has been felt ; but am I right in concluding that the real reason is that for the sake of making sure of water you have deliberately gone ahead of your transport, of which there will be an adequate supply ? The supply of transport with the Indian contingent is, I imagine, more than adequate, and ought to be soon close to you. There are also complaints in the paper about ammunition running short, etc. One must always expect and, indeed,

welcome criticisms of this character, but I like to see the answer.

(3) This leads me to the "censure," and I imagine that Colonel Methuen has managed it well, although occasionally I read what surprises me. For instance, I think he should have stopped the report to the *Daily News* about an armistice, which was a pure fable, and the report to the *Times* of Colonel Milne Home<sup>1</sup> being missing. I know how very difficult a task has been assigned to him. But anything likely to startle the public should, if possible, be kept out, until it is properly verified.

(4) The question of attaching to you a Marine officer has been again raised, and this time Lord Northbrook is not opposed to it as he was before. What he suggests is that you might ask the Admiral to spare you, not a field officer, but some young officer of lower rank who has already distinguished himself, and who could be of use to you.

(5) I have reserved to the last the most important question of a political character affecting you, I mean our relations to the Turks and the Turkish contingent. I have kept you as well informed by telegraph as I could of the shifting prospects of the Convention, and it has been most difficult from day to day to anticipate what the outcome would be. To-day, however, your proposal to utilize lines on the Canal, and on your advance, fits well into Lord Dufferin's<sup>2</sup> despatch, assuming that the Sultan had been brought down "on his knees," and is ready to come into his old alliance with us, and place a force, small or great, at our disposal, on the same terms as in the Crimea. Lord Northbrook and I have agreed to a despatch, which, if Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone concur, will go to-night, insisting on the Proclamation against Arabi being issued at once, and agreeing to take two or three thousand men at Port Said to be at your disposal. If this is finally settled, Sir Charles Wilson will be sent to you for instructions, and he will then be our Commissioner with the Turkish General, who is to be possibly Baker. I will keep you fully informed on this subject, but I may say now that nothing could have been more opportune than your telegram of to-day.

(6) I have omitted one question about which I had

<sup>1</sup> Second in command of Household Cavalry Regiment; M.P. of Berwick-on-Tweed, 1874-80; 1880-85.

<sup>2</sup> Then Ambassador at Constantinople.

some conversation with my colleagues a week ago, I mean what sort of conditions should be insisted on when Arabi is beaten. We think that the army should be entirely disbanded, all arms and forts surrendered, rebels to be tried, where they have committed crimes, but not to be put to death without our approval. The sort of cases in which we would not undertake to prevent execution would be:—

- (1) Having taken part in the conflagration of Alexandria.
- (2) Having abused the flag of truce on the 12th of July.
- (3) Having been concerned in the murder of Europeans.

The lives of all who had not committed crimes would be spared. I only write this as a general indication of opinion, which might possibly be modified. I hope that you yourself are none the worse for the fatigues of the campaign. I am very tired of London, and heartily wish I were with you.

*From General Sir Patrick MacDougall.<sup>1</sup>*

HALIFAX, U.S., September 1, 1882.

First let me offer my sincere congratulations on the complete vindication of your recent reforms which has been afforded by the success of your arrangements for the expedition to Egypt. M. de Lesseps notwithstanding, I do not believe in any prolonged opposition; but if my forecast is wrong, and there should be much sickness, periodical drafts of seasoned soldiers will be required. I have not gathered how these are to be provided, but I conclude by means of Army Reserve men attached to the dépôts represented in the field, as the only alternative to "volunteering."

An article in the *Times* of the 12th of August on "the

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Patrick MacDougall, K.C.M.G., one of the most advanced thinkers on military questions, had been on the Quarter-Master-General's Staff in the Crimea; Adjutant-General of Militia of Canada, 1865-69; Deputy Inspector-General of Volunteers, 1871-3; and Deputy Quarter-Master-General, 1873-78; Colonel of 2nd West India Regiment, 1882, and of the Lincoln Regiment, 1891; Superintendent of Students at Military College, 1854-57; Commandant of Staff College, 1857-61. On all Army matters he had a most forward mind, and had been often referred to by Lord Cardwell in the introduction of his great reforms. He died in 1894.

mobilization," expresses well the disadvantages of our too rigid centralization on the outbreak of war, in connection with which I venture to enclose an extract from a paper I have prepared.

Wolseley is doing his work well. He cleverly managed to mislead Arabi through that *bête noire* of a general, the special correspondent. He played the same trick in the Ashanti business on a small scale; and I knew directly I saw his orders for attacking the Aboukir forts that he would turn up in the Canal. . . .

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

ISMAILIA, September 8, 1882.

Yours of the 1st instant just received. I quite understand from it the terms upon which I may temporarily treat with Arabi and other rebels. I am put out about this Indian contingent business, for I am doing all I can to keep the Native troops in front. There must be a limit, however, to my arrangements in this respect, for I have to think of the English troops as well as of the Native, and my force is not that strong that I can afford to take away its steel tip in the shape of British soldiers, and replace it by a tip of tin in the form of the sepoy. I am most anxious to meet the views of the Indian Government, even although they are somewhat *harshly* expressed, but I have first of all to think of the great Imperial interests involved in my being successful. This force is practically a good brigade weaker than had been intended—a reduction in force that has been occasioned by the circumstances attendant upon the bombardment of Alexandria. This makes me very chary of parting with my British regiments in order to make way for what of course we all know—but cannot say so publicly—to be the very inferior material supplied by Native troops. I know the good and the bad points of natives very well, from having campaigned with them in Burmah, China, and for three years with them during the Indian Mutiny; and, much as I admire and like them, I cannot in any way institute a comparison between them and the English soldier. When a contingent comes from India it is much to be regretted that some known organization such as a brigade or a division is not sent. To send a brigade of cavalry and a brigade of Native infantry, and to think they could be formed into a Division is folly. Cavalry, to be of

any use, in this country especially, must act at great distance from the infantry. My object in asking for three regiments of cavalry was to enable me to let slip a Cavalry Division for Cairo after my big fight ; but Macpherson with his Native infantry could not keep up with his cavalry. Then how can I keep the cavalry with him ? Had I known that Wood's Brigade was to remain at Alexandria, of course I should have been very glad to have had a whole Infantry Division from India. However, Macpherson is a very good fellow, and I mean to give him an independent little command after our action at Tel-el-Kebir, but until then the Indian Government must understand that I cannot put either General Hamley or Willis under him, they being both lieutenant-generals in the army, and he only a colonel.

Before this can reach you, we shall have attacked, and, please God, have disposed of Arabi's army. What he will do, I know not ; he has scarcely any troops now at Cairo, having brought on every one here to oppose me. I learn from my private letters that the most curious untruths have appeared in the papers about our men running short of ammunition, want of physic, etc., etc. Methuen could not possibly read all the telegrams that go home ; he told me yesterday that he had just initialed a telegram for a correspondent containing over a thousand words. I shall ask him about the armistice<sup>1</sup> when I meet him to-morrow at camp, near Kassassin, to which I move then. Until the railway, and especially the telegraph, were in working and in good working order, I could not well leave this for more than a day at a time, but, now that both are going on favourably, I shall bid Ismailia a long farewell. It has been a curiously busy place since I landed here on the 21st of August, crowded day and night with men, baggage, stores, horses, and transport. I may be asked why I did not get the railway and telegraph in working order earlier ; my answer is, the engineers and material did not arrive until after all the troops came, and then my first care was the quays and wharves here and the arrangements for disembarking stores and getting them into the railway train. It is only men who have known Balaclava or Pehtang (where we landed in China) who can realize what this little place has been for the last three weeks, or who can understand the great difficulty attendant upon

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 119.

the disembarkation of cavalry, infantry, and stores at the one point. The difficulty of approach to Ismailia through a canal has rendered this actual operation here the most difficult I have ever yet been engaged in.

The dépôts coming on here will come in good time after my action. I wish the three hundred men for the Guards were here now, as the brigade is not as strong as I should like it to be. I can so fully understand all your political difficulties at home that I hate asking you for anything, willing though you always are to meet my requirements in every way. The demands upon you from Ireland seem increasing rather than diminishing. It is the consciousness of this that makes me especially anxious to end the tension here as rapidly as possible. I believe in my heart that I am quite equal to any force that could be produced against me in Egypt; but then, an indifferent force strongly entrenched as Arabi is in my front, ceases to be despicable. Of course I may be mistaken, and I may possibly find myself too weak to make any very serious impression upon the entrenchments in question; my own firm conviction is, however, that I shall have possession of them all by Wednesday next (the 13th instant) at latest, and if I am in luck, will have sent Arabi off reeling from a blow that he never recovers from. I will do my best from my own point of view, and to the best of my ability; but I may fail, for I am only too human. Whatever may be in store for me and those with me, I am very grateful for the constant support I have had from you.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BALMORAL, September 6, 1882.

The *Standard* of the 5th says the men in Egypt complain that they cannot get any tobacco. The Queen hopes that something can be done for the purpose of supplying them with this almost necessary of life out there. Her Majesty wished to help in sending out tobacco, but I scarcely know what the Queen could do in this matter.

*To Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, September 8, 1882.

Your letter of the 26th of August reached me on the 6th instant. I read it with great interest, as I also did

yours of the same date to the Duke. You hardly mention yourself, but I hope you are standing the work and heat well. I think that I thoroughly understand the difficulties about transport which you have had to surmount, and I congratulate you very heartily on the successful manner in which you have got over them. They have been the subject of a great deal of newspaper controversy, envenomed to some extent by a correspondent who seems to think that your dash at Khassassin Lock was as simple an operation as a walk to his club, where he would find all he wanted. The public, however, now quite understand, as a rule, the position. We shall, however, get when you return a good many hints for the future, and I hope not to be classed among those who dislike to learn by experience. I think I also quite understand from your letter and your telegrams up to this morning what you contemplate doing when you strike the great blow. Let me again say that I shall never ask you to tell me anything as to your intentions beyond what you wish to give me. I place absolute confidence in your judgment, and I have been most careful not to telegraph to you anything which could look like a military instruction. In fact, the other day I qualified an instruction of a strictly political character about the landing of the Turks, because I thought it might read like pressure on you to move earlier than you intended. About Macpherson's appointment, I telegraphed to you yesterday with the suggestion that the Duke made, and in which Lord Northbrook, who understands Indian susceptibilities, concurred. He has been a Major-General in India for two years, having there a Divisional command, and in the eyes of India is something more than a Colonel with local rank (in Egypt) of last month.

I have done my best to smooth over these difficulties, and I hope we shall succeed in this case. Your not wanting more cavalry from India was fortunate. I received shortly after the other your letter of the 31st of August. Its very cheerful tone was a good omen of what I hope is now impending. As I did last week, I will now sum up some matters of interest.

(1) We have been daily engaged here and at the Foreign Office in disentangling the web which the Sultan at Constantinople spins without ceasing, and I think we have at last brought matters to a point at which little remains to be done. I have kept you well advised, and

the only mistake I made was to indicate two days ago that you should call Sir Charles Wilson to your Headquarters at once, whereas we only intended that he should go to you when everything was signed and sealed.

You will, of course, understand that the political and military considerations do not run in quite the same lines, there being a real political object in coming to an agreement with the Sultan, provided he accepted our terms. I gathered from you that you would feel no uneasiness at having two or three thousand Turks in the Canal. Unluckily Lord Dufferin understood by "in the Canal" at Port Said, and to this we could not agree.

The Sultan up to to-day has been very obstinate, insisting on the whole force landing at Port Said, and we are firmly resisting. I suppose you will bring some of the Turkish contingent to the front, and I fancy that when their blood is up there is no fear of their being treacherous.

(2) I sent you last week the heads of such a surrender of the enemy as we think we ought to insist upon, and for fear of my letter not reaching you, I telegraphed to you on the 6th. We are somewhat anxious about Cairo, and Mr. Gladstone has written to me suggesting that special precautions against its suffering from Arabi's vandals as Alexandria did, should be taken whether by threatening death to all concerned or otherwise.

We shall think this over, and perhaps communicate our views officially; but I rather doubt myself whether we can do more than leave the matter simply to your judgment.

(3) I hope that we have done all that you could wish about reinforcements and drafts. I have already explained to you the Parliamentary position, and but for the manifest improvement in Ireland (thanks to Lord Spencer's and Mr. Trevelyan's courage in dealing with the police) it might have been difficult to reduce the Home force as much as we have. The "Lease Question" has been especially difficult, but we have been buying more rapidly than I had thought possible, and we shall be able to send you all you have asked. As to men, you will remember that according to the original programme, only twenty-five thousand officers and men formed the expedition, including the dépôts at Malta and Cyprus. This number has now been increased by 7900, and including the Indian contingent and their Reserve at Aden, 50,600 officers and men will be under your orders. I do not conceive that

this is a man too much, but it is a great force to have placed where they are in six weeks, and I quite appreciate the uneasiness which exists in some quarters as to the drain on our resources necessary not only in sending them out, but in maintaining them. So far, your casualties have been marvellously small, but next week may tell a different tale. You will not care to receive many letters of this length, so I will conclude, only saying that I have heard of Lady Wolseley as looking very well.

On the 13th of September, Tel-el-Kebir was fought, and the following day Cairo was taken, and Arabi a prisoner.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BALMORAL, September 13, 1882.

This is indeed glorious news—the end of Arabi and his rebellion. The Queen delighted.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BALMORAL, September, 13, 1882.

Only a line, requiring no answer, to say I think that you also ought to be congratulated on the great news received to-day, especially after the anxious moment of expectation you must have endured, knowing that the attack was to take place.

I trust your sons are both safe and sound.

*To Sir H. Ponsonby.*

September 14, 1882.

Thank you for your kind congratulation. The anxiety has been very great, and for eight weeks I have not been out of town for above three or four hours at a time. Very few of my friends and acquaintances have been wounded, and none killed. My two sons are all right.

I have had constantly before me the Queen's anxiety about the Duke of Connaught, and I am extremely glad that he has come through the campaign so well.

*From the Journal of Mrs. Childers.*

On the evening of the day of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir Mr. Gladstone and some of the members of the Cabinet

dined with us, and when Mr. Gladstone came in he said to me, "I congratulate *you* most especially, Mrs. Childers ; we are all to be congratulated, but your husband most of all—he has Benjamin's mess." I thanked him very much, and said it was very pleasant to hear him say so, and he said, "Oh, well, he has had the most to do with it." I said, "Well, he has worked hard," and he said, "Indeed he has worked, and right well too," and he said to Hugh, "This has added greatly to your already very distinguished reputation."

The firing of the Park guns—the customary salute for victory—had been apparently omitted, and the omission gave rise to an amusing correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister, who wrote to inquire why the guns were not fired to announce Tel-el-Kebir, adding that he fired them as Minister of War in 1846 on the Indian victories.<sup>1</sup>

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

WAR OFFICE, September 15, 1882.

My advisers in the Office are searching for precedents relative to firing guns in honour of the victory. The only excuse we can offer for neglecting to do so before is that, relying on your official statement in the House of Commons, we have hitherto believed that we have not been at war.

Mr. Gladstone on this admitted, as the guilty man, that he had assured Parliament that there was no legal status of war with any recognized State or Power, and that this was the case during the American Civil War.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

DOVER, September 15, 1882.

My hearty congratulations on our great success ; it is most cheering. I thank you for your very kind telegram.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone succeeded Lord Stanley as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in December, 1845, and during his tenure of office—thence till July, 1846—the victory of Sobraon and defeat of the Sikhs took place. The two offices were separated at the time of the Crimean War.

As nothing special is to come before you to-morrow, I shall now stay on here till Monday, when I shall be up early. I presume the third regiment will now be hardly sent out to Alexandria after what Wolseley has telegraphed as to *not* sending out any more men, and I presume that the *Euphrates* will *not* go to Bermuda or Halifax for the troops ordered thence.

I wish we could manage before the Indian troops return home to bring some men of each regiment home to receive a medal from the Empress Queen. The effect would be an excellent one, and would well repay the small outlay it would involve. It is worth thinking of.

*To Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, September 15, 1882.

TELEGRAM.

Her Majesty commands me to convey to you, and to her Army, her hearty congratulations on the bloodless occupation of Cairo, on the capture of Arabi and other rebels against the authority of the Khedive, and on the termination of a campaign in which her brave troops have so greatly distinguished themselves.

*To Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

WAR OFFICE, September 15, 1882.

My most hearty congratulations on the most perfect military achievement England has seen for many a long year. The 15th of September was a date more than once mentioned in our July discussions either for the action which you always anticipated at Tel-el-Kebir, or for the capture of Cairo; and this you have more than accomplished. The effect is already marvellous.

Abroad we have quite regained our military reputation, and at home the critics are not silent, but emulous who shall be able to swallow most of their carping and spiteful prophecies. To Government I need hardly say that your success is of the highest importance and value. It is our triumph after two and a half years of difficulty and depreciation, and putting aside party consideration, gives us an authority which years of Parliamentary and diplomatic victories could not confer on a Ministry. We owe this to your skill and energy, and to the valour of the Army, well lead and handled as it seems to have been in all its parts.

I have no letter from you to answer, and it is useless now that the war is over to write about past incidents ; but there are one or two matters about which I have telegraphed, and as to which you might like to hear from me. I suppose we shall receive to-morrow the conditions of surrender to which you have agreed. You will have heard to-day that we have somewhat enlarged your powers about surrendering prisoners who have committed crimes, practically leaving it to you to decide whether, if they receive a fair trial, we should have anything to say about their execution.

Then as to forts and strong places. It appears to us most important that we should hold them all at once, giving the Khedive no excuse to maintain an armed force, at least one drawn from the recently rebellious regiments. We shall, undoubtedly, insist in the final settlement of Egypt on their having no forts north of Cairo, and I hope not at Cairo itself, and no army except for Upper Egypt, and a small bodyguard for the Khedive (could not this force be drawn from India?). All officers of the Rebel Army should be banished to the Red Sea, or the Soudan, so as to be for ever excluded from Cairo or Alexandria. I suppose you will take the baggage at once. It will be a nice question what to do with the guns, etc. I am giving you no official instructions. But do not forget Bismarck's "Beati Possidentes!" In the permanent settlement, the questions of the railways and the Canal will be of the first importance. We must have safeguards against a repetition of M. de Lesseps's tricks, which have probably forfeited the Company's charter. The Company is a trading concern under Egyptian concession, with its *siege social* in Egypt, and has set itself up as a political body, capable of deciding that the Khedive was an English prisoner and Arabi the ruler of the country, and declining to obey any orders but those of the French Government.

The railways are, I think, national property, and it will be desirable that we should somehow control them also. A few words about the future movements of the Army. We are, of course, suspending all the shipment of men and material, and asking your opinion as to the disposal of what is on the way. But it will be necessary very carefully to consider what force should be brought away, how and when. The impression is that for some months, and until the Khedive has organized his police

and small army, we shall have to keep some seven or eight thousand men in Cairo and Lower Egypt; and that perhaps next summer this may be reduced to two thousand, the nucleus of an army, for a year or two more. We are disposed to think that the Indian contingent should come away first, and then one of your Divisions, leaving one Division till the summer. It will be desirable to consider very carefully, having regard to the roster, which should be the battalions to remain; and I have to-day asked Taylour<sup>1</sup> and Herbert<sup>2</sup> to think this well over. The two or three battalions remaining after next summer might be on the Colonial establishment, the others (except the two going to India in 1882-83) returning to their old places on the Home establishment. I have again telegraphed to you to-day about the Turks. If any troops were under the Convention, I hope you will find distant stations for them where they can do no harm. There will be some advantage in allowing a few to be on the Canal, as the Turkish Government will certainly not pay M. de Lesseps, and the quarrel will be advantageous.

I suppose they could do no great harm at Damietta, otherwise Kosseir would be a quiet spot. I did not mention to you last week that we had selected General Wray for second in command at Alexandria; and General Harman expressed to me his strong wish for an R.A. or R.E. Major-General. He left on Tuesday, or we should have detained him. I wish I could see you at Cairo myself, but I fear I shall get but a short holiday, and I hope that you yourself will be back soon. Doubtless I shall receive your wishes on that respect. The political settlement of Egypt will take some time, and we should not think of detaining you for it. But I hope that before you come away you will be able to master the Egyptian Military Question, which will be one of the most important constituents of the general problem.

I am very happy indeed to add to my letter my best congratulations on what I have just received—her Majesty's approval of your being granted a peerage. We join in very kind regards.

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Richard Taylour, Adjutant-General at the War Office during the absence of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir Arthur Herbert, Quarter-Master-General; died 1897.

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

CAIRO, September 17, 1882.

Everything is quiet and going on very well here. I heard from Malet yesterday evening in answer to a telegram I sent him upon the subject of the Khedive coming here. His Highness proposed coming next Thursday, but I have urged Malet to get him here as soon as possible, as I think his presence in Cairo will have a good effect. I shall receive him here with all the pomp that my very ragged and dirty soldiery are capable of displaying. With the exception of the garrison of Damietta, all the troops have now dispersed to their homes; they did so with such glee, that one could see how devoid the Egyptian army is of anything like military spirit. Nearly all the leading rebels of real importance have been arrested, some by us, others with my sanction by Sultan Pasha, who is now here. I presume you will allow them to be tried by Court Martial in the same way that the chief rebels were recently tried at Alexandria. I understand the trials were well conducted. The Khedive has no backbone, and will probably be disposed to deal leniently with Arabi and his friends, which I think would be a mistake. One cannot afford to trifle with rebellion; it is too serious a crime to be treated lightly. This rebellion has deprived thousands of their lives, has caused many thousands more to be maimed for life, and has devastated large districts of the country. Any leniency shown to the ringleaders would, in my opinion, be a premium on treason, whereas an example made now may secure peace and quiet to Egypt for years to come.

I see no good reason why the Khedive should again raise an army; a few local regiments raised in the Soudan for service there, and a good gendarmerie for Lower Egypt is all that he can really require for the maintenance of order. This plan would reduce the annual expenditure considerably; all his manufacturing establishments for war *matériel* to be converted to other and more useful purposes. The amount of money that must have been expended upon the purchase of field artillery and munitions of war must have been enormous in the past.

As soon as the Khedive and Malet arrive, I shall consult with them as to the reduction of the force now here. My own opinion is that we can safely afford to send away the Indian contingent and one Division, together with most of our corps details before the end of this

month. If for political reasons you wish the Indian contingent retained here, of course we could send away a corresponding number of English troops. I should, however, be glad to get rid soon of the Indian, as their followers break into houses everywhere, and plunder right and left. I presume also they are very costly. I should be sorry to lose Macpherson, who commands the Indian contingent, as he is one of the best generals I have here, but, although I like and admire him, I don't like his native followers.

I am sending you a long telegram to-day about the arrangements I have made for stopping all troops and drafts at Malta, and for breaking the contracts we had entered into in the Levant for supplies of every description. We can, I think, now safely curtail all expenditure, and you may depend upon my using every effort to do so. Yesterday I received a telegram from Mr. Gladstone, informing me that he was about to confer a peerage upon me. I am very grateful to him and to you for this early recognition of what I have done here.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

WAR OFFICE, LONDON, S.W., *September 19, 1882.*

The Duke of Cambridge proposes that a small party from each of the Native regiments which have come from India to Egypt should come on here to receive a medal from the Queen. Something of the kind was proposed when the Indian troops went to Malta at the time of the Russian scare, but it was found that there was some difficulty about their being amenable to discipline. This has now been put straight. I have no very strong opinion on the subject, which is more for Hartington than for me, but I see no tangible objection. The expense would be small.

I am not certain that the medal would be ready, assuming that they arrived in a month or so from now, but I wrote to the Queen yesterday suggesting a design, and as the Mint is closed I think it will be struck as soon at Birmingham as at Tower Hill. The Queen is, as you know, rather exercised at the idea of any troops leaving Egypt, and I have told her that Wolseley has no authority to send any away without distinct orders from us. We had a very satisfactory first sitting to-day of the Committee on Egyptian Affairs, Lord Granville in the chair.

There was absolute unanimity as to what we are to call

the "free navigation" (not neutralization) of the Suez Canal. Afterwards Lord Granville, Dilke,<sup>1</sup> Sir Auckland Colvin<sup>2</sup> and I discussed for some time Egyptian finance. If you have no objection, I propose to take ten or twelve days' holiday from Friday evening next. I shall not go far, and shall be within reach by telegraph. My doctor refuses to answer for the consequences if I do not go. H.R.H. proposed to me to-day that we should go to Cairo in November–December after the prorogation.

*To Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

WAR OFFICE, September 19, 1882.

May I ask you to mention to Her Majesty that, with her leave, I propose to take a holiday for ten or twelve days, from Friday evening next? I have not slept out of town since early in July, and indeed I have not had more than a fortnight's rest since I was in Scotland last year, and my doctor tells me he has had great difficulty in keeping me going for the last six weeks, but that I shall infallibly break down if I do not go away now. I am very reluctant to do so, at so interesting a time, but I shall be back before (I hope) any important movement takes place. I shall not go farther than to Germany.

*From the Queen.*

BALMORAL CASTLE, September 21, 1882.

The Queen wishes to add a few words to her telegrams.

She is especially anxious that no troops should move in a hurry, as she feels convinced no reliance can be placed yet on the Egyptians, who would, if they had a chance of success, again rise—that is, the Army.

If Arabi and the other principal rebels, who are the cause of the deaths of thousands, are not severely punished, revolution and rebellion will be greatly encouraged, and we may have to do all over again. The whole state of Egypt and its future are full of grave difficulties, and we must take great care that, short of annexation, our position is firmly established there, and that we shall not have to shed precious blood and expend much money for nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Successively Comptroller-General in Egypt, and Financial Adviser to the Khedive.

*From Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

CAIRO, September 23, 1882.

Your extremely kind note of the 15th instant has this moment reached me, giving me time to send you a few lines by the post which goes from here in an hour. I am very grateful for all the flattering things you say of me. I have also had a charming note from Mr. Gladstone, which I shall answer by the next mail, as I have not time to do so now. Of course you know—indeed you refer to it in the postscript to your letter—that his note contained the offer of a peerage which he had already made me by telegraph.

What I intend proposing to Malet when he comes here next Monday is, that the garrison of Alexandria should consist of two or three battalions of infantry and two garrison batteries of artillery under Major-General Harman; that at this place to consist of a full division of infantry (not less than 7000 bayonets), two regiments of cavalry and four batteries of artillery (one a battery of horse artillery). I would keep the Malta Fencibles here for the winter; they will find garrisons for Damietta and forts on the coast—of course a proportion of Departmental corps to stay here also; all the rest to go home or to India or to the garrisons in the Mediterranean.

I think you will have to keep this force here until next April, when possibly you may be able to reduce it by one half, if not more. When I have conferred with Malet I shall telegraph to you fully on the subject.

I suppose the Guards and the Household Cavalry should go home. I would propose to leave the two regiments of cavalry remaining here under Colonel Ewart of the Life Guards as their brigadier; he has done very well and proved himself to be a very good soldier. General Lowe to return home and Baker Russell to return to India. It would then be for the Adjutant-General and the Quarter-Master-General at home to reconstitute the two brigades to remain here, making each up to 3500 bayonets, an arrangement I could not do here without the roster of regiments for foreign service.

I have been urging the Khedive to come here ever since I reached Cairo, but for some reason best known to himself he has deferred his journey until next Monday, the 25th. I intend giving him a grand reception, with all the

troops lining the streets, salutes, etc., etc. When he comes here, I shall urge upon Malet the immediate trial of Arabi and the other leaders in the mutiny and rebellion, for the sooner they are disposed of the sooner will matters settle down in Egypt.

I have not proposed Adye to remain here in command, because I know he hopes to get Gibraltar, and I sincerely hope he may, for he has worked hard—no man could work harder or to a better purpose than he has done. He deserves everything you can give him, and I have always felt quite at ease knowing he was here to replace me, if some wandering shell had knocked my head off at any time.

Please remember me very kindly to Mrs. Childers, and thank her for her charming note of congratulation, which I shall answer by the next post. I hope you may enjoy your well-earned month's leave, and look forward to the pleasure of seeing you very soon.

*From Major-General Sir Herbert Macpherson.<sup>1</sup>*

CAIRO, September 24, 1882.

I have to thank you for two letters ; the second reached me yesterday, and I need not say how gratified I am at your remarks on the proceedings of the Indian portion of the Force on the 13th. I am sure you would have enjoyed the gallop into Zagazig. It was something like a hunt, and came very near Mr. Jorrocks's description of that sport, as the morning lesson at Tel-el-Kebir had deprived our pursuit of much of its danger. The Egyptian troops were streaming along the canal bank, while we stuck to the railway within 250 yards of them ; but, being intent on railway stock, we could not afford to notice them.

The scene at the station (there are four junctions) was very amusing. Six engines had their steam up. Three trains were puffing and in motion. We managed to stop all three, and a fourth, which we feared had escaped, in the hurry ran on to a wrong line and into a train coming from Benba, blocking both lines, and enabling us to secure these two engines and trains. We had to tear up a rail

<sup>1</sup> Commanding Indian contingent, afterwards Commander-in-Chief in Madras ; had commanded a brigade through the Afghan war : a V.C., and one of the most distinguished Indian commanders ; he had commanded the Indian contingent sent to Malta in 1878. He died in 1886, lamented by all.

on the Salahieh line to prevent the inopportune arrival of an Egyptian division that the station-master assured me he expected in a quarter of an hour.

*From Sir Fleetwood Edwards.*

BALMORAL, September 23, 1882.

In reply to your letter of the 21st instant to Sir Henry Ponsonby, I am to inform you that the Queen is only anxious, for reasons already explained, to avoid all appearance of the Duke of Connaught and his brigade being ordered home with undue haste.

Her Majesty would probably have no objection to their forming part of the first division to return, but would possibly prefer that the other brigade of that division should precede them.

I am to ask you, however, to write again so soon as the plans and dates are settled for the return of any portion of the force, and before any brigades are specified, when the Queen will be better able to define her wishes.

Judging from the apparently unsettled state of the country, her Majesty supposes no troops will be coming back for the present.

*From the Earl of Selborne (Lord Chancellor).<sup>1</sup>*

HEATH'S COURT, OTTERY ST. MARY, September 20, 1882.

I cannot help writing to say how much I think we all, and the whole country, owe to you for your admirable execution of the duty of your Office in the preparations and arrangements for the late operations in Egypt, and to offer you my sincerest congratulations upon the brilliant and thoroughly satisfactory results which have been so soon attained.

I rejoice, also, that no evil accident has befallen your sons, or others in whom you had a direct personal interest.

It must be a great pleasure to all your friends that your administration of the War Office, at so critical a time, should have been so signally successful; and I, who know how much your good judgment contributed to the councils on which this success has followed, participate to the full in the gratification which all your colleagues must feel.

I read, in the papers from the Foreign Office which

<sup>1</sup> His son, Viscount Wolmer (now Earl of Selborne, and First Lord of the Admiralty), was Mr. Childers's Private Secretary.

reached me to-day, with extreme satisfaction, the *coup de grâce* which Granville has at last been able to give to the Turk. Both the subsequent proceedings of the Sultan, and the practical conclusion of the war, have removed all the grounds on which I was among those who thought, last Wednesday, that we were bound to go on with him. It is a very happy thing that he has at last succeeded in excluding himself.

*To the Earl of Selborne.*

117, PICCADILLY, September 22, 1882.

I am very much obliged to you for your kind congratulations. I cannot pretend to have been without anxiety, but I had every reason to believe that Wolseley would fulfil his promise to defeat Arabi, and be in Cairo by the middle of September, and he has kept his word to the letter. There has been one great advantage in the arrangements for this campaign compared with others, that Wolseley and Adye, the first and second in command, were, with his Royal Highness, my chief advisers at the council which we held daily in my room during the whole of July, and then left to work the machine which they had themselves constructed, with no intervening time except what they occupied in going out. This was much criticized in the House of Commons, where giving commands to principal officers at the War Office was called jobbery. But it prevented what is most mischievous, the friction between the War Department and the generals. Wolseley and Adye have had everything they asked for, and themselves saw it supplied.

As you know, I thoroughly agree with you about the Turks. I am glad now that we were not, some weeks ago, as impetuous as I then wished, for no one can now blame us. We go abroad for a fortnight to-day.

Will you remember us most kindly to your host ?<sup>1</sup>

On the 12th of October, Mr. Gladstone inquired as to the list of military honours, adding, "I shall then urgently request you to allow me to name you to the Queen for the Grand Cross of the Bath, which you have earned, let me say, many times over by your management during the present year." To this he replied—

<sup>1</sup> Lord Coleridge.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*October 13, 1882.*

I am very sensible indeed of the uniform kindness which you have shown me in my public life, and of which your proposal to name me for a G.C.B.-ship is the last and not least illustration.

But I hope you will allow me to beg you not to think further of it. There are several reasons influencing me in this decision, but the only one I need mention to you is that I hope to be "Mr. Childers" as long as I am in the House of Commons; a member of which I shall try to be as long as my strength and the approval of my constituents allow.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

*BALMORAL, October 19, 1882.*

I repeated to the Queen what you said to me about Arabi's trial and added that she would probably hear more fully from Lord Granville on the subject.

Her Majesty hoped that I had duly impressed on you the feeling of anxiety which agitated her lest the advantage we had gained by the war should be lost through mistakes made respecting this trial.

The Queen asked me whether you had said anything with reference to the honours to be bestowed on the officers for their conduct in the war. I replied you had not, as our interview was brief, but that I imagined you would wait for Wolseley's return before deciding on what should be submitted.

The Queen did not fix any day for Wolseley coming here, but said she hoped to see him very soon after his arrival.

I will ask her again.

After this the Duchess of Connaught privately asked me what would be given to the Duke, and added that she would tell me that what he particularly wished for was the same distinction as the other brigadiers, viz., nothing more than they may receive.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

*October 23, 1882.*

The Queen agrees to the Duke of Connaught receiving the same reward as the other general officers in Egypt.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

I have considered the question of the division of the charge for the War in Egypt between the Imperial and Indian Governments, and I think that, on the whole, the fairest and most practical plan will be to charge nine-elevenths of the additional expenses entailed on Imperial revenues (beyond the normal cost defrayed from the ordinary Estimates) to this country, and two-elevenths to India. This is nearly the proportion of fighting men landed in Egypt from this side and from India. I would suggest that when the cost has been roughly arrived at, a round sum should be paid to the Indian Treasury rather than that the account should be kept open until this exact charge has been determined.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

117, PICCADILLY, November 23, 1882.

Would it not be well when you explain the course to be taken as to the charge on India for the contingent in Egypt, to state that in future the resolution under the statute,<sup>1</sup> authorizing the employment of Indian troops out of India, will state the numbers and cost; in fact be, as nearly as possible, on the lines of the Vote of Credit and Vote of Numbers we take for Imperial troops? I was much impressed by the way Fawcett<sup>2</sup> put this in the paper which was circulated, and you will remember that I urged it (as to numbers), and that the Attorney-General was also (as to numbers) in its favour. In the debate on the similar vote for the Afghan War, I think I described the resolution as a "general letter of credit,"<sup>3</sup> and objected to it on that ground.

Almost the last act Mr. Childers performed, before leaving the War Office, was to draft a Royal Warrant for the establishment of the Royal Red Cross for nurses. The history of the institution of this decoration is interesting.

*To Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

WAR OFFICE, March 17, 1882.

My attention was called last year to the services

<sup>1</sup> Government of India Act, 1858, s. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, Postmaster-General.

<sup>3</sup> The words were "an absolute and unlimited Vote of Credit," *Hansard*, Vol. 243, p. 1021.

rendered to the sick and wounded, both during the Zulu and Transvaal Wars, by the Bloemfontein Sisters, and a communication was sent to them thanking them for their zeal, self-sacrifice, and devotion. The late principal medical officer had reported that their work was most indefatigably performed, their devotion and self-sacrifice beyond all praise, and their skill and tact of the greatest value to himself and the other medical officers during a very trying time. I did not at the time bring the services of these ladies under her Majesty's notice, and the letter of commendation and thanks did not contain the Queen's name; but I have every reason to believe that some expression of her Majesty's gracious notice and approval of their work would be greatly appreciated by these ladies, and I should be very glad if I may be permitted to convey such a message to them.

Her Majesty's attention having thus been directed to the work of the Bloemfontein Sisters, the Queen did not allow the subject to escape her memory; and, six months after, on the day before Tel-el-Kebir, her private secretary wrote by command to express to Mr. Childers her Majesty's views of the desirability of establishing a decoration for all nurses employed on active service.

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BALMORAL, September 12, 1882.

The Queen thinks it would be very desirable to establish a decoration for nurses who are employed on active service, and for those who assist them at home, and commands me to give you her views on this subject.

Miss Nightingale and a very few of the nurses under her and associated with her got a badge after the Crimean War; but that was only for that special occasion and very expensive, and not in the form of an Order, which the Queen now wishes to establish.

The badge or cross need not be of an expensive nature, and might be worn with a ribbon on the shoulder.

It should be granted to nurses sent out by the War Office and also to others who have made themselves useful in the field, such as the Bloemfontein Sisters, in whose praise you wrote to the Queen last March.

Her Majesty would wish to confer this decoration on the nurses who served in the South African wars as well as on those now in Egypt.

*To Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

WAR OFFICE, *September 14, 1882.*

May I ask you to say to the Queen, in reply to the command contained in your letter of the 12th instant about a decoration for nurses, that I will lose no time in considering the question; which, however, may require a good deal of inquiry and thought. Do you happen to be able to give me, or to tell me where I can obtain, any information of the St. Katherine's foundation, of which William Ashley used to be the treasurer, and which at his death was, I think, utilized, by her Majesty's special wish, for nursing purposes to some extent? No one here has any information on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

*From Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

BALMORAL, *October 23, 1882.*

I did not mean to convey to you that the Queen preferred a "decoration" for nurses to an "order," because I do not clearly understand the difference.

Both must be conferred under certain regulations, and both are honours given by the Queen.

In your letter of the 22nd you suggested that some

<sup>1</sup> An elaborate account of this Charity will be found in the Commissioners' Report (1837), vol. xxxii., Part II., p. 860. It was founded by Matilda, with the consent of her husband, King Stephen, in 1148, on the east side of the Tower, and was originally intended for a master, three brothers chaplains, three sisters, and six poor scholars. In 1826 the Hospital sold this site to the Dock Company for £127,000. Statutes for the Hospital were made by Lord Somers in 1698, and Lord Lyndhurst in 1829. In the latter year it obtained a grant of property at Gloucester Gate, Regent's Park. The present objects of the Charity are to provide—

- (a) Home and pensions for ladies and gentlemen.
- (b) Education for thirty-six boys and twenty-four girls, to be admitted between seven and eight years of age. Apprenticeship premiums of £10 are paid for boys when fourteen.

The Hospital is now also the central office of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

of the nurses should receive pay from St. Katherine's Hospital. This would bring them under the regulations of that hospital, and therefore I used the expression "civil nurses."

Your proposal that the cross should be granted to nurses engaged in time of peace is a good one.

It is considered very desirable that "those who have assisted at home" should be included.

Would you take into consideration the rules it would be desirable to make for this order or decoration?

The Queen has had a cross made as a model. Her Majesty is not quite pleased with it and will make some alterations. I send it to you to look at.

N.B.—Those who have assisted at home would include the Queen and the Princesses.

*To Sir Henry Ponsonby.*

CANTLEY, December 12, 1882.

I send you a draft of the Royal Warrant which I propose to submit in due course for her Majesty's approval, establishing the new decoration for nurses. The title has been a difficulty with us; but, upon the whole, I don't think that anything can be devised better than the "Royal Red Cross." The Red Cross has now been adopted by the whole Christian world as the symbol of aid to the sick and wounded in war; and it is the badge of our own Army Hospital Corps. You will observe that it may be conferred on princesses, or any ladies for special services in providing for aid to sick and wounded soldiers and sailors, and on nursing sisters, whether serving in the field or in hospital. Thus, nurses who have shown devotion in epidemics during peace would be eligible.

I would strongly urge that the statutes of St. Katherine's Hospital should be simultaneously altered so as to admit of pensions being granted to a limited number of the new decorees. This would have a very good effect in showing that the object is not merely titular but substantial benefit.

There has been of late a good deal of remark about the additional orders and decorations recently founded, but nothing is so popular as the grant of small pecuniary boons to persons of the humbler class, for good service.

The Royal Warrant which instituted the decoration was promulgated on the 23rd of April, 1883. It states that, besides the princesses of the Royal family, the Royal Red Cross may be conferred upon any ladies who may be recommended to her Majesty's notice by the Secretary of State for War for special exertions in providing for the nursing, or for attending to sick and wounded soldiers and sailors ; and it may also be conferred on any Nursing Sister who may be similarly recommended for special devotion and competency, displayed in their nursing duties with the Army in the field, or in the Naval and Military Hospitals.

The two years and a half during which Mr. Childers was Secretary of State for War was an eventful period in the history of the administration of the Army. The introduction of the territorial organization is alone sufficient to render his tenure of the War Office a remarkable one. The establishment of that system marks the commencement of a policy having for its aim the binding together more closely of the regular and auxiliary forces, and the rendering of the military system more popular with the country. To the great importance of this Mr. Childers had referred in his speech at Pontefract, and his words had been hailed with delight by Lord Roberts (in his letter already quoted).<sup>1</sup> The carrying through of this great change had been a difficult and delicate task ; it was therefore particularly pleasant to Mr. Childers to feel that it had been effected without impairing the good relations existing between himself and the supporters of the older order of things, and that no divergence of views had prevented the loyal co-operation of those who may sometimes have doubted the wisdom of the measures which duty required them to accept and carry out. He wrote officially to the Commander-in-Chief to express his

<sup>1</sup> *Vide ante*, Vol. II. p. 68.

appreciation of the support he had received through this time of re-organization and change, and of pressure due to the Egyptian War, and he received the following reply:—

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

GLoucester House, November 27, 1882.

SIR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, and at the same time to thank you for the expression of your appreciation of the manner in which the work of the Office has been conducted during the late period of unusual pressure. All the officers of the Head-Quarter Staff have performed the exceptionally arduous duties required of them in a manner which has called for my special notice and approval, and their devotion and the cheerful manner in which they have carried out my orders deserve the greatest praise.

It is, therefore, very gratifying to me to feel that the work done by them has attracted your special mention, and it will be a pleasure to me to convey to them the contents of your letter.

I cannot conclude without assuring you how greatly I have appreciated the cordiality with which we have been enabled to conduct these difficult and delicate questions to a successful issue, in the interest of the Army, and to the benefit of the public service.

I beg to remain, sir,

Yours most sincerely,

GEORGE.

A few days later the Duke wrote:—

December 11, 1882.

I am glad to find you are gone out of town again, for I feel assured that you want rest and a holiday.

From what you hint, I fear that there is but little chance of your remaining at this office. You know how greatly I regret this, and I only hope your successor may work as agreeably with us as you have done. Have you any idea as to who this is likely to be? All sorts of rumours are afloat on the subject.

I shall be at the office all Thursday and part of Friday, but on Friday morning I am going to Sandhurst for the public day, returning in the afternoon. I hope certainly to see you when you come up.

To this Mr. Childers replied, reciprocating his Royal Highness's kind expressions, and sending his photograph, which he asked the Commander-in-Chief to accept as a memento of their work together at the War-Office.

*From H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge.*

GLoucester House, Park Lane, W., December 18, 1882.

MY DEAR CHILDERS,—I am intensely gratified by your amiable thought in sending me your photo, which is excellent, and which I greatly prize, as also the very nice note accompanying it. Rest assured that my feelings are in entire accord with your own, as regards the amiable relations existing so happily between us. Had you been in England, I should have asked you to accept a photo of myself as a little memento of the period when we were brought together in close official connection. As it is, I will get one framed for your return, which I should like to know occupies a place on your writing-table.

I hope that health and strength may be entirely restored to you by your foreign trip, and with kindest regards to Mrs. Childers,

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,  
GEORGE.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(1883-1884.)

Chancellorship of the Exchequer—First Budget—Question of the Suez Canal—M. de Lesseps and the Shipowners—Demands of the War Office—Mr. Childers suggests sending Foot Guards to Gibraltar—Second Budget—Light Gold and Conversion of Debt—Purchase of the Blenheim Raphael—Needs of the Navy—Financial Troubles of the Country.

ON the 1st of December, 1882, Mr. Gladstone wrote saying that Lord Derby was joining the Government as Indian Secretary,<sup>1</sup> that Lord Hartington was willing to take the War Office, and offering Mr. Childers the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, stating that he considered him the man best qualified for that post.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

DUNSTER, December 2, 1882.

I am much obliged to you for recurring to your former proposal about me; and I need not say that I accept it with the greatest pleasure. I have done my best at the War Office, but, as you know, . . . am very glad to return to what I have always considered my own line. I never had so happy a year as when I worked under you at the Treasury in 1865-66. But I hope you are quite sure about Hartington's claims. He has done so much for the party, both in and out of Parliament, that I should shrink from being the cause of disappointment to him. I feel this the

<sup>1</sup> He became Colonial Secretary, Lord Kimberley going to the India Office.

more because he has always treated me with generosity and confidence.

As to my health, I am writing to my doctor, asking him to arrange a consultation with Sir W. Gull<sup>1</sup> *early* in next week. We had always intended to leave Dunster in a few days, and certainly not to stay here many days after the Prorogation. I gather from to-day's paper that the House rises this afternoon.

If Sir W. Gull pronounces me fit for hard work again, either without or after a short holiday, I shall get from him a clear opinion as to the length of any holiday, and I shall then ask you if you can spare me. I should propose to remain, first, in town long enough to arrange about taking over the duties of the office, and I suppose I shall have to go to Windsor. Would you kindly tell me your movements?

I hope that your indisposition is only slight. The weather is most treacherous.

To this Mr. Gladstone replied that nothing could be more handsome than the references to Lord Hartington; but that if the latter had preferences he had honourably waived them in the interests of the public service.

The matter being settled, Mr. Childers put himself at once in communication with his former secretary, Sir Reginald (now Lord) Welby, as to the details of his new office, the routine of business, and the Treasury chambers.

*From Sir Reginald Welby.*

ATHENÆUM CLUB, December 11, 1882.

First of all let me express my pleasure at learning that you are to be our new chief, and let me wish you a tenure at the Treasury as successful as that which you have had at the War Office. Next let me say how much I hope you will go away for the six weeks without thinking of business, so as to give yourself the real benefit of the rest which you need. I am sure from my observations that one main source of Mr. Gladstone's unfailing strength is his power

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Withey Gull, Bart., Physician in Ordinary to the Queen.

and his *determination*, when requisite, to lay aside his work until the day and hour when he decides to resume it.

As to your room. The first man I recollect saying that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should sit in the Treasury was Sir George Cornwall Lewis,<sup>1</sup> and I have always felt the advantages which would ensue from making the Chancellor of the Exchequer more visibly *head of the Treasury*.

He spoke, if I recollect, of the Chancellor sitting in the Board Room. I can see no difficulty, if you thought it advisable, in removing the Whip, his secretaries, and the Lords into Downing Street, and handing over to you and your staff the Board Room and the Whip's passage containing Lord Richard Grosvenor's room, the writing room, and the Whip's private secretary's room.

If anything deserves your attention it is the relation of the Treasury to local finance. It is the point for which I was anxious to see Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order that, in dealing with it, the whole weight and authority of the Government in its most powerful form might be thrown into the scale.

To the foregoing letter Sir Reginald Welby added some further information as to the Treasury business.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has his own questions of financial policy to attend to. Apart from them—

(1) He has to deal with the different suggestions and appeals which are made to him on Revenue matters, and these, as a rule, do not pass through the Treasury.

(2) He is specially head of the Finance branch of the Treasury, the supreme function of which is the movement of Funds. Money must be ready when and where wanted for the public service. With this duty the Finance branch of the Treasury is charged, involving as it does the whole loan service, temporary or permanent. This includes correspondence with the Bank of England.

Upon these matters the head of the Finance branch is the Chancellor's special officer, reporting to him and taking his orders.

In ordinary times this work, though involving important questions of policy, is not heavy.

(3) As head of the National Debt Office and Master of

<sup>1</sup> Chancellor, 1855-1858.

the Mint, a few questions come to him from Sir R. Wilson<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Fremantle<sup>2</sup> direct.

(4) He has to attend to representations from his colleagues demurring from or anticipating Treasury decisions.

(5) He has to decide on papers which the Financial or Permanent Secretary refer to him.<sup>3</sup>

The extent to which questions may be referred to him is a subject entirely for his own regulation.

Mr. Lowe<sup>4</sup> took a great quantity of papers.

At first Sir Stafford Northcote<sup>5</sup> did so, but he left great discretion to Mr. Smith.<sup>6</sup> When he became Leader<sup>7</sup> Mr. Smith naturally spared him.

The references to Mr. Gladstone,<sup>8</sup> who was Prime Minister as well as Chancellor, have been limited, but he was always ready to deal with the questions submitted to him.

Lord Beaconsfield,<sup>9</sup> as you may imagine, never cared for Treasury business.

Sir G. Lewis preferred a classic, though ready to deal with what came before him.

Sir Charles Wood<sup>10</sup> had the reputation of taking kindly to Treasury papers.

Mr. Goulburn<sup>11</sup> was a cross between Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of the Treasury.

This sketch goes over more than forty years, and before that Treasury practice was different and business less.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, G.C.M.G., then Comptroller-General of the National Debt Office; now President of the Grand Trunk Railway, Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Then deputy-master of the Mint; now Sir Charles Fremantle, K.C.B., British Official Director of the Suez Canal.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Vol. I., p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Chancellor, 1868-1873.

<sup>5</sup> Chancellor, 1874-1880.

<sup>6</sup> Financial Secretary, 1874-1877.

<sup>7</sup> Of the House of Commons; on Disraeli becoming a peer.

<sup>8</sup> Chancellor, 1852-1855; 1859-1866; Chancellor as well as Prime Minister, 1873-1874; 1880-1882.

<sup>9</sup> Chancellor, 1852; 1858-1859; 1866-1868.

<sup>10</sup> Chancellor, 1846-1852.

<sup>11</sup> Chancellor, 1841-1846, when Sir Robert Peel really directed the finances.

The financial prospects in the spring of 1883 were satisfactory, and when Mr. Childers introduced his first Budget an actual surplus of £98,450 remained after paying the whole expenses of the Egyptian expedition, and for the coming year he estimated a surplus of £2,690,000, based on the existing taxation. With this he proposed to remit three-halfpence of Income Tax, to promote the extension of workmen's trains by setting aside £135,000 towards abolishing railway passenger duties of a penny a mile and under, to put by £170,000 towards establishing sixpenny telegrams, and also granting occasional gun licences of £1.

He also proposed to create new terminable annuities falling in in twenty years' time, by which £70,000,000 of National Debt would be immediately extinguished, and ultimately £172,000,000 and an annual charge of £3,374,000.

These proposals met with a good reception, and before the session ended he had the satisfaction of carrying through the last-named proposal in the shape of a Bill by which it was intended to put it out of the power of any future Chancellor of the Exchequer to tamper with the Sinking Fund. In 1875 Sir Stafford Northcote had fixed the sum of twenty-eight millions as the amount of the interest of the whole debt. Year by year this sum had been more and more in excess of the requirements of the interest, and in 1883 not more than twenty-two and a half millions were required for this purpose; a surplus of five and a half millions would be left, and with this Mr. Childers proposed to create new terminable annuities which, as they fell in, would operate towards the reduction of the debt. This scheme was supported on both sides of the House, and by a large majority became law.

The Egyptian question followed Mr. Childers from the

War Office and was not to be shaken off on his leaving Pall Mall. He had no sooner arrived at the Treasury than it arose in a new form. Early in 1883 Lord Granville received a deputation complaining of the mismanagement of the Suez Canal Company, and this was followed by a public meeting, when the construction of a second canal was proposed.

*To Earl Granville.*

*May 9, 1883.*

I have been discussing with Wilson<sup>1</sup> the line which the English directors, under the instructions of the Government, ought to take at the present crisis of the affairs of the Suez Canal Company.

I am not one of those who believe that we should give any encouragement to the formation of a second canal across the delta; although by not snubbing those who promote this project, we may be able to obtain in the end better terms from M. de Lesseps. Our aims should be:—

(1) In the interest of commerce to bring about a duplication of the present canal.

(2) Also in the interests of commerce to bring about a further reduction of the tariff.

(3) In order to prevent the recurrence of what nearly prevented our operations being carried out last year, to obtain an equal control of the Canal with the French. Four-fifths of the revenue of the Company is derived from British trade, and we hold nearly half the shares. Our claim to half the control is therefore very strong.

On the other hand, M. de Lesseps is very anxious to obtain from the Khedive a concession for the land required for the duplication; an arrangement for the supply of water to Port Said by means of a freshwater canal; and thirdly (what is most important) an extension of the term of concession, of which eighty-five years remain.

It is also possible that M. de Lesseps may not be able to obtain the additional capital he would require for duplicating the Canal, without our assistance, at less than five per cent. For the moment, however, I set aside this consideration. The amount required would probably be £6,000,000.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Rivers Wilson.

As to (2) the ten francs per ton will be reached on the 1st of January, 1884. I think it would be desirable that the fall of fifty cents per annum should continue until the rate of toll reaches seven francs, if not a still lower figure.

What I would suggest is, that draft instructions be prepared authorizing the English directors to endeavour to obtain our three objects, *especially the third*, on condition of helping M. de Lesseps to obtain what he wants.

If you concur, I should be glad to be one of those to whom the draft instructions will be sent.

*To Earl Granville.*

*May 25, 1883.*

I have read the letter of the English directors of the Suez Canal of the 20th instant. The following remarks occur to me on it :—

(1) The proposed reduction of dues appear to me altogether inadequate. The abolition of the pilotage dues will doubtless be a great boon, but I think it should take place, if not at once, at any rate as soon as the profit admits of distribution at the rate of eighteen per cent. But the suggestion that, the present distribution being at the rate of twenty-six per cent., the transit dues should only be diminished by fifty cents below next year's rate (ten francs), when the distribution reaches twenty-five per cent., and by a further amount of fifty cents when the distribution reaches twenty-five per cent., and by a further amount of fifty cents, when the distribution reaches thirty per cent., and so forth, appears to be absolutely inadmissible. I think that the principle of reducing the rate *pari passu* with the increase of divisible profits is sound, and may be accepted ; but it would be, to my mind, right to insist that the fall in the rate should be fifty cents with every two per cent. of increase in the distribution above eighteen per cent., down to a fixed minimum of seven francs ; and even then it would be necessary to provide that the new capital for the duplication be obtained at the lowest possible rate of interest.

In the arrangements for this purpose her Majesty's Government may be able to render assistance in various ways ; and I have discussed them carefully with Wilson ; but I think it would be premature to give the English directors official instructions to do more than ascertain the

views of M. de Lesseps, reporting the result with their opinion.

(2) I attach little weight to the proposal that the number of English directors be increased ; provided that in some other way we obtain such a share of the control of the Canal as would prevent the repetition of the great risk we ran last year of being excluded from it by the action, or with the concurrence, of M. de Lesseps. But one English director should be vice-president, and another a regular member of the managing committee, and the proposals as to the *Inspecteur de la Navigation* and as to the pilots should be carried out. . . .

On the 4th of June, the annual meeting of the Suez Canal shareholders was held, at which M. de Lesseps stated that the shareholders had decided on making a second canal, and on the following day the chairman of the P. & O. Company at the annual meeting declared that it mattered little by whom the improvement was carried out. Mr. Bright, in a speech on the history of the Canal, said, "We must either act with France, or against France ; I should not say against France, but with her." It was accordingly arranged that M. de Lesseps should come over to London and discuss the matter with the English Government ; and, if possible, arrive at an amicable settlement. After five days in London the Government and M. de Lesseps arrived at an agreement, a summary of which Mr. Childers announced in the House of Commons on the 5th of July. The Company was to construct a second canal as far as possible parallel to the first ; the dues and tolls to be considerably reduced, one of the English directors to be vice-president, and one to be a member of the *Comité de Direction*, the Company to engage a fair proportion of English pilots, and the English Government to advance, as required, not more than £8,000,000 at three and a half per cent., with a sinking fund to repay the capital in fifty years.

The terms of this agreement provoked a storm of opposition, and eventually they were withdrawn, the Government considering that delay would be better than the attempt to force an arrangement about which there did not seem to be any likelihood of general assent.

As soon, however, as the Government proposals were withdrawn, it began to be admitted that Mr. Childers and the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Chamberlain) had made, with the means they possessed, the best bargain in their power, and it was allowed that a reasonable solution had been proposed. Although shelved in the House of Commons, the question was not dropped, and later in the year M. de Lesseps proposed to come over to England and have personal interviews with the ship-owners. Mr. Gladstone expressed his delight at hearing that M. de Lesseps had started this idea. In his opinion the difficulty arising from the dual character of the directors (and consequently of the Cabinet) as business men, and as politicians, could only be got over by M. de Lesseps being brought into personal communication with the shipowners and traders.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the technical question of the relative advantages of one broadened canal as opposed to two narrow canals was being warmly discussed; and the Inspector General of Fortifications urged the adoption of the former scheme.

*From Sir A. Clarke.*

*August 15, 1883.*

I gather that the traffic and engineering chiefs of the Suez Canal Company were in favour of a broad canal as

<sup>1</sup> "Nous avions le tort de ne pas nous connaître, ce qui est fréquent entre les hommes et les nations, et ce qui est si souvent la cause des plus graves malentendus. Quand nous eûmes fait connaissance, nous reconnûmes que nous avions des intérêts communs qui seraient beaucoup mieux servis par notre union que pas de vaines querelles" [M. Charles Lesseps in *P. and O. Pocket Book* for 1899].

opposed to two narrow ones. Every seaman and engineer who has studied the question, and who has expressed his views on it, agrees with them.

Mr. Wells, the chief engineer of the Weaver Navigation, sends me a note to the same effect.

The American engineers, with their large experience, say the same. The arguments of those from whom emanated the idea of a second canal, are utterly unsound; two canals will, over one single narrow canal, no doubt give some facilities to meet an increase in the volume of traffic seeking transit; but they will fail in enabling ships to get from sea to sea in one daylight. The widened canal will enable them to do this, if not to travel by night as well, which I believe to be perfectly feasible.

With a return to the natural and original section which a widened canal would assume, erosion of the banks from high speed will no longer be feared; it was to the unwise adoption of Hawkshaw's flattened section that the injury to banks from the wave caused by this form of this section is due. This wave would not be created by what I call the normal section, the section, in fact, which nature in this soil of Egypt always assumes.

I hope I have said enough to obtain for this subject a further consideration.

I feel assured the widened canal will for generations—as it can be ever gradually widened—answer all the objects of transport and will set at rest and calm the fear which this unwise idea of the narrow canals has set up.

In accordance with his proposal, M. de Lesseps came to London in the autumn, and after personal interviews with the shipowners and traders, an agreement was arrived at on the 30th of November.<sup>1</sup> The shipowners were to have additional powers and influence in the direction, the dues

<sup>1</sup> The agreement between M. de Lesseps and the shipowners was approved by the Government in May, 1885; two years later a convention was signed in Paris between France and England, neutralizing the Canal and placing it under a joint commission; in October, 1888, this was ratified by the Sultan, and in the following December, by all the Great Powers.

were to be reduced, and a technical commission was to be appointed to decide the question of a broadened or a second canal.<sup>1</sup>

At the conference Mr. Childers had taken care that the great interests of the Australian colonies in the Canal should not be forgotten, and the Government of Victoria gracefully acknowledged the fact. "I have the honour to inform you," wrote Mr. Murray Smith<sup>2</sup> to him, "that I have received a despatch from the Honourable James Service instructing me to convey to you the thanks of the Government of Victoria for your courteous attention to the interests of the Australian colonies in connection with the International Conference on the Suez Canal."

During the session of 1883 the Government had accepted a general resolution, proposed by Mr. Rylands in the House of Commons, in favour of economy; but the demands of the War Office were becoming alarmingly pressing, and before long it became increasingly apparent that there was small chance of redeeming the pledge given to reduce the public expenditure. Lord Hartington wrote that without some addition to the ordinary establishment we could not employ six battalions in Egypt in addition to the ordinary colonial duties, and to this Mr. Childers replied:—

*To the Marquis of Hartington.*

January 23, 1884.

Assuming that the occupation of Egypt is not permanent, but that it may last for eighteen months or two years, I admit that the continued employment abroad of seventy-five battalions, against sixty at home, will disorganize to a dangerous extent the system

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed by Sir Andrew Clarke were adopted by this commission, and it was decided to carry them out.

<sup>2</sup> Agent-General for Victoria.

introduced by Lord Cardwell, and modified in 1881, under which every battalion abroad has its sister battalion at home.

To redress this inequality, I propose that the garrison of Halifax be temporarily reduced by one battalion of infantry, and that two battalions of the Guards, or two battalions of Marines, take the place of four battalions of the line in Malta and Gibraltar. The Guards will be all the better for a little Mediterranean service; and the Marines are as much in their place as part of the garrisons of Malta and Gibraltar (especially the former) as they are when forming part of the garrisons of Portsmouth and Plymouth. They will also be available for relieving those on board the Mediterranean Fleet.

I only make these suggestions on the assumption that our occupation is not likely to exceed eighteen months or two years. If it is to be permanent, undoubtedly the force at home must be augmented. But in that case Egypt would have to pay us for the force we keep there, as India does; and this would be far more than Egypt's present contribution of four pounds per man per month.

The idea of any serious increase to the Army was exceedingly unpalatable to the Prime Minister. If it could not be shown that it was due to a sudden cause, the question would certainly be put, "Why, when you agreed last year to a resolution for retrenchment, did you conceal from the House that the Army Estimates were to be increased?" And to meet the difficulty, Mr. Gladstone urged the employment of Marines. This, however, was not enough, and Mr. Childers again urged that two battalions of Foot Guards should be sent to Gibraltar. But to this suggestion one of the leading military authorities opposed a firm resistance, and in a long letter combated Mr. Childers's views, expressing lively misgivings lest the carrying out of the proposed arrangement, and especially the despatch of the Guards to Gibraltar, should arouse suspicions as to what power England was about to attack, and as to the apprehensions which such an unheard-of movement should give rise to.

H.R.H.  
S.Y.

The views of 1884, however, are not those of the present day; and the guardsman has been recently as familiar a sight at Gibraltar as he is in Dublin or at the Tower of London.

In June, 1883, Mr. Childers presided at the Newspaper Press Fund Dinner, and in the course of his speech referred to the subject of "reporting" among the ancients. The reference produced the following information from a correspondent:—

Since reading your interesting speech on the occasion of your presiding at the Press Fund meeting on Saturday last, it has occurred to me several times that there was a well authenticated account of "reporting" to which you did not allude, and with which you would probably like to be made acquainted.

The case is to be found in Eusebius, Eccles. Hist., who tells that when Origen in the third century delivered his theological lectures daily in Alexandria, which he had not committed to writing, a gentleman of the name of Ambrose employed several shorthand writers to take them down, that they might not be lost to posterity, and these notes were transcribed by young women (fair writers, *καλλιγράφοι*). I may add that this possibly may account for the discrepancies to be found in Origen's theological views, of which many writers complain, and for which I have never seen an adequate reason suggested. I cannot say with certainty in which book of the Histories this anecdote is to be found, as it must be nearly forty years since I read it, and I have not the History to refer to, as on my health failing me some twenty years ago, I sent my books to Keble College Library.

To which he replied:—

I am much obliged to you for your note. I have found the story about Origen's lectures and Ambrose in the twenty-third chapter of the sixth book of Eusebius's History. The young ladies are said to have been *ἐπὶ τὸ καλλιγράφειν ἡσκηφέναι*, and the shorthand writers are called

*ταχυγράφοι*, a word I have not seen elsewhere. Your explanation of Origen's uncertain theology strikes me as very good, but in these days we are not without examples of as striking discrepancies in the writings of some popular theologians.

On the 30th of January, 1884, he presided at the annual dinner of the London Chamber of Commerce; and in replying to the Lord Mayor, he spoke warmly of the exertions of Mr. Chamberlain in passing the Bankruptcy Bill of 1883. It seems strange now to look back at the time when Mr. Chamberlain needed defenders in the City of London, but such was, indeed, then the case. "Put politics aside, gentlemen, altogether, if you wish," said Mr. Childers, "but in this commercial city and in this room there are many who will feel and appreciate the genius and energy of Mr. Chamberlain." The next morning brought him an appreciation in the most official style:—

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER,—Many thanks for your hearty defence of me at the London Chamber. It was most handsomely done.

J. C.

The Budget of 1884 was simple and businesslike. The difficulties in Egypt had swallowed up a large surplus which had been accumulated, so that while the revenue had reached £86,549,000, the expenditure had risen to £86,436,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could only estimate a surplus of £263,000 for the coming year, and no room was left for remission of taxes. But two proposals were included which were of importance, one of which roused such opposition among the bankers that it was withdrawn; while the other met with more approval, and though only partially successful, prepared the way for the larger measure which Mr. Goschen carried through later on.

The former (the question of light gold) had been for some years engaging the attention of the Treasury. In the British Empire some ninety million sovereigns and forty million half-sovereigns were in constant use, and out of this total more than half were light in weight and not, therefore, strictly of legal tender. In order to guard against a loss of confidence in the coinage, Mr. Childers proposed to substitute for the existing half-sovereigns ten shilling pieces containing only nine shillings' worth of gold. If this plan were accepted, he anticipated that in twenty years the profit arising from the issue of the token half-sovereigns (£250,000 per annum) would meet the cost of the withdrawal of light gold without entailing any loss upon the individual or the State.

*From W. Beckett Denison, Esq.*

OLD BANK, LEEDS, May 7, 1884.

I beg to enclose a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the English Country Bankers' Association yesterday, at which I presided. I was requested, in sending you the resolution, to inform you that it was carried by only a small majority of the bankers present, but I am bound at the same time to add that the majority represented some of the largest bankers in the country. I was myself in favour of the resolution. To-day I have received letters from some important bankers who were absent yesterday, and whose judgment in such matters is reliable, expressing their approval of your proposal. I think the objections to it are much more theoretical than practical.

#### RESOLUTION.

That, having regard to the very great inconvenience arising from the present condition of the gold coinage, and the importance of speedily restoring it to a proper condition without loss or inconvenience to the public, this meeting is prepared to support the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

*From Mr. John William Birch.<sup>1</sup>*

27, CAVENDISH SQUARE, May 8, 1884.

When we discussed the question of the proposed token coinage I ventured to express my humble opinion that the more it was thought out by men who had studied the question, from English and Continental points of view, the greater the opposition it would meet with. The experience of the last few days has more deeply convinced me that the measure will not be acceptable to the country, and I shall rejoice to hear that you have graciously determined to withdraw it. Excuse my troubling you, but I know you have the country's interest at heart and will not mind my expressing my opinion without reserve.

*To Mr. J. W. Birch.*

May 8, 1884.

Your unfavourable view of the ten-shilling proposal has been a great disappointment to me, the more so as I do not find that you, or any one who thinks with you at the Bank, can give me a satisfactory substitute. To charge the gold equivalent of over £2,000,000,<sup>2</sup> you agree with me in considering inadmissible, and what appears to me to find most favour with your colleagues, a recurrence to the proceedings of 1842, with some allowance from the Treasury in extreme cases, would raise such a storm as I am not prepared to face. If my plan is defeated, I suppose I must make the best of the present law, but in ten or fifteen years the result will be intolerable.

However, I do not hope to convince you, and I suppose we must agree to differ.

So great was the opposition to the ten-shilling token proposal that it was withdrawn.

The other proposal in the Budget of 1884 was a tentative measure for the conversion of the National Debt. Mr. Childers offered to allow the holders of 612 millions of Three per cents. to exchange them at their option either for Two-and-a-half per cents. at 108 for every 100

<sup>1</sup> A Director of the Bank of England; Mr. Childers was a frequent visitor at his house at Rickmansworth.

<sup>2</sup> There is a hiatus here. The sum named is the abatement in value of the half sovereigns in constant use, if the intrinsic value of each were reduced by a shilling.

stock, or for Two-and-three-quarter per cents. at 102 for each 100 stock. If the whole Three per cents. were converted in this way voluntarily, there would be a net saving of £1,310,000 in the annual interest of the debt after setting aside a sinking fund to pay off the nominal increase in the total amount of the debt; in the event of the conversion not being made voluntarily to any appreciable extent, it was to be gradually effected compulsorily.

In support of the proposal Mr. Childers said:—

“I think the House, as responsible for the interests of the taxpayer, will admit that, as a matter of general policy, it is advisable to take advantage of the reduction from time to time in the general rate of interest to reduce also the rate of interest on the public funds. That has always been the policy of Parliament. Whenever the funds have permanently risen above par, it has always been the policy of Parliament to endeavour to reduce the rates of interest. I may go back as far as 1749, when the Four per Cents. were at a considerable premium, and when Mr. Pelham carried through Parliament his well-known measure for reducing the interest on the then Four per Cents., first to Three-and-a-Half per Cent., and afterwards to Three per Cent.”<sup>1</sup>

The Bill was resisted by very few members. Mr. Hubbard moved its rejection; but it was supported by Mr. Goschen, and was adopted by 117 to 34.

Mrs. Childers in her journal says:—

*April 24.*—Mr. Hubbard, prompted by Lord Randolph Churchill, moved the adjournment of the House, and of course, though he afterwards withdrew it, this caused delay, and the Irish, seeing Lord Spencer in the gallery, wrangled on till seven, when Hugh made his Budget statement. I never heard him speak so perfectly easily, without the slightest apparent effort, and there was no hitch. The proposal as to light gold had been rather expected; but that as to the reduction of the interest on the National Debt took the House quite by surprise.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 288, p. 1412.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Childers did not give any inducement to bankers to advise

Early in 1884 it became known that the Duke of Marlborough wished to sell his pictures. The artistic world, keenly alive to the importance of the opportunity, spared no pains and left no stone unturned to secure the masterpieces of Raphael, Vandyke, and Rubens which were now to leave the walls of Blenheim, and were in some danger of leaving the country itself.

Public opinion had begun to express itself, but the definite proposals which followed received their first impulse from Her Majesty herself.

*From Sir H. Ponsonby.*

OSBORNE, February 11, 1884.

The Queen understands that the Duke of Marlborough is going to sell his pictures, and hopes that some of the most important may be bought by the nation.

This was at once followed by a letter from the Director of the National Gallery.

*From Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederic) Burton.*

Although there may be no grounds for the more alarming part of the story in yesterday's *Times*, yet there can be no doubt that the Berlin authorities, ever since the sale of the Marlborough gems, have eagerly looked forward to the time when the pictures should follow the same fate. In fact they have never made any secret of their intention to secure for their museum, and at almost any sacrifice, the famous Raphael "Madonna degli Ansidei" of the Blenheim collection.

their customers to come in under his scheme; so that when customers asked their bankers whether they should commute their holdings, some were told, "No; you will get better terms." Four years later, Mr. Goschen's conversion scheme came before Parliament, and the terms then offered by the Government were  $6\frac{1}{2}$  or 7 per cent. worse; but on this occasion a commission of 1s. 6d. per £100 was allowed to authorized agents, when their clients converted their holdings into the new stocks (other than "New Threes"). Mr. Childers unsuccessfully opposed the payment of a commission contingent on advice being given in one direction, but with this exception he gave the proposals of 1888 his full support.

If the newspapers and periodicals which concern themselves with art have hitherto observed silence, it has been because they were admonished that the cause would or might be better served by their doing so, and not from the absence of a very strong and deep-seated feeling in the community.

The Blenheim Raphael is by far the most important of the master's works now remaining in private hands in any country. It surpasses immeasurably both Lord Dudley's "Crucifixion" and the Borghese "Entombment," for the former is a very early production, and were it not signed or otherwise authenticated might easily pass for a work by Perugino. The latter—whatever the interest attached to its history—is admitted to be a laboured and unsatisfactory performance, besides being in no very good condition, and it will certainly never be allowed to leave Italian soil. Thus the "Madonna degli Ansidei" is the only one of Raphael's greater or thoroughly characteristic works that we shall ever have a chance of acquiring for England, in whose national collection the great master is at present but meagrely represented.

On the 24th April Sir Frederick Leighton, in forwarding a memorial from the Royal Academicians, urged the Government to secure at least four of the Blenheim pictures—Raphael's "Holy Family," Vandyke's "Charles I," and two of the Rubenses. "You will learn," he wrote, "with little surprise how deep is the anxiety with which the whole artistic community, in whose name we speak, awaits the decision of Her Majesty's Government. It would indeed be impossible to overstate that anxiety, partly because the occasion is one of an absolutely unique and unprecedented kind, and partly because the competition which has sprung up in late years in such matters is of that urgent and immediate nature as to admit unfortunately of little—of *no* hope I believe—of a middle course."

On the 4th of July a memorial was presented to the Government from sixty-four Members of Parliament.

The price that we ask the Government to be prepared to offer for these real masterpieces, even if limited to that



*Selena, wife of Colonel Wallbanke Childers  
daughter of Lord Eardley.*

Waller & Cokerell ph.s.c.



at which they are valued by the Director of the National Gallery, is in either case unprecedented. But so is the occasion ; and it is because the occasion is thus so unprecedented and unlikely to recur that we urge the Government to step outside the hard line of a severe economy in order at one stroke to raise to a higher level the collection of pictures of which the whole nation is proud, and which is the source of as widespread and refined enjoyment to the poor as to the rich.

Members of every shade of political opinion—Mr. John Morley, Mr. Albert Grey,<sup>1</sup> Mr. Broadhurst,<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter Barttelot<sup>3</sup>—signed this memorial, and Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Childers, “I hope a great effort may be made to secure the Raphael.”

Mr. Childers moved cautiously. Mr. Burton told him that he had heard that a certain nobleman had been requested by the Prussian Government to purchase the Blenheim pictures for them. “Thank you for your note,” he replied. “In these matters I would rely as little as possible on any man’s word, Jew or Christian.” After much correspondence and considerable discussion, it was decided to make an offer for the Raphael and Vandyke, and eventually the former was purchased for £70,000 and the latter for £17,000.

The demands on the Treasury continued to increase. Early in the year the first Suakim campaign took place, followed in the summer by the fitting out of the Nile Expedition and the Expedition to Bechuanaland under Sir Charles Warren, and on the top of all this came the agitation for a large increase in the Navy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer’s hopes of redeeming the pledge given in accepting Mr. Rylands’s motion had vanished long ago, and the question had now become one of making both ends meet.

<sup>1</sup> Now Earl Grey.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for Stoke-upon-Trent, afterwards Under-Secretary when Mr. Childers was at the Home Office.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for West Sussex.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

October 1, 1884.

I think that you ought to know my impressions about the prospects of Finance, now that we are in the second half of the financial year.

The Revenue is not in a very hopeful state, but I do not think it can be called worse than sluggish. Taking Customs and Excise (less Railway Duty) together, the first six months do not fall far short of my estimate. I have every reason to hope that the Income Tax and the Stamps will be fairly satisfactory.

But there are two disturbing elements in the year's account of a very serious character.

1. Egypt ought to pay us about £600,000 on account of her military contribution, and the interest on the Suez Canal loan. So far we have not exacted, and she could not pay, anything. If her approaching bankruptcy is not annulled before the 31st of March we shall be short by that amount.

2. The vote of credit for £300,000, which exceeded my original estimate of surplus, will certainly have to be largely supplemented; and I think we shall be very fortunate if the Naval and Military expenditure of the year is less than £1,200,000 beyond the first estimates.

I am afraid, therefore, that we must look forward to a probable deficit on the year's account of a million and a half, assuming that the Civil Supplementary Estimates (and they will not be heavy) are met by savings.

But in addition to this we must be prepared for the heavy onslaught on the Treasury which is now being organized in connection with the Navy. Northbrook being away,<sup>1</sup> I cannot at this moment estimate what sort of demand, under the influence of the present agitation, the Admiralty are likely to make.

I hope to see Campbell-Bannerman, who is an excellent economist and administrator, in a few days; and I shall be able to obtain from him the views of his naval colleagues. My impression is that we shall be forced to do something in the direction of additional Naval Estimates. There will also be strong pressure for additional military expenditure, for the coaling stations; and we can look for no help from the War Office in resisting this demand.

<sup>1</sup> In Egypt with Sir Evelyn Baring.

What immediately presses is a decision whether Supply is to be set up in October. If it is set up, we shall have to ask for votes for all the expenditure we have reason to believe will be incurred in excess of the provision in the Act, and this must be a large sum. What must follow about Ways and Means? I presume that you would wish, if possible, to provide, during the year, all the revenue required to meet the expenditure, or at least to raise so much additional revenue as, whether collected before or after the 31st of March next, will be equal to the additional charge. I am studying this unpleasant question carefully. All I can say now is that it will be very difficult to add to the Income Tax of the year, by an Act passed in November. There may be, however, other methods.

Next year we shall have the advantage of an annuity of £800,000 falling in. But if we keep our promises as to the relief of local burthens, this will not go very far. We must also look forward to further loss of revenue in connection with Spirits, if not with Stamps. It is, however, premature to enter upon conjecture of this kind.

I fear I am sending you a gloomy letter.

Mr. Gladstone replied that this news did not surprise him any more than rain would after the recent fine weather; but as he wanted the Autumn Session to be restricted to the Franchise Bill, he asked whether there was no way of avoiding, with so large an expenditure, going to Parliament, which must mean setting up Supply; if it must be done, the inconvenience would be great.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*October 4, 1884.*

I have started an inquiry whether there is any precedent for Supply being set up otherwise than on the Queen's Speech. I do not myself remember any instance.

The agitation for a large increase in the Navy, accompanied as it was by a demand for carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Colonial Defence, increased during the summer and autumn. Pressed on the one hand by the demands of the War

Office and Admiralty, and held back on the other by the aversion expressed by the Prime Minister to any avoidable increase of expenditure, the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself between the hammer and the anvil.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*November 7, 1884.*

Campbell-Bannerman was preparing a paper for me on the strength of our navy and foreign navies, when he left the Admiralty.<sup>1</sup> He has since completed it, and I think that you may like to see it; as it is my only copy, perhaps you will return it to me.

The points to which I would draw your attention are:—

- (1) The description of my prospective plan (you dislike the word programme) in 1869 and 1870.

No other prospective plan has ever been made either before or since. The description is at pages 44 to 47, and the table showing how it has been worked up to (or rather has not been until Lord Northbrook became First Lord) is opposite page 52.

- (2) The comparison between the strength of our Armoured Navy and those of Foreign Powers now and until 1888, at pages 23 to 27.

You will observe that we have now (page 23) 342,000 tons against 300,000 (French, Italian, and Russian) of the three Principal Powers; and that at the end of 1887 we shall have 438,000 against 423,000.

But it is assumed that we make no addition to our Fleet in 1888, and we shall then have only 432,000 against 495,000.

I do not quite understand why it is assumed that we add nothing in 1888, and the explanation given me by the Admiralty is not clear.

You may observe that, at the end of 1887, we and Italy shall have 541,000 tons, while France, Germany, Russia, and Austria will have 460,000. I should think that this is the most unfavourable combination against us that can be expected. Of course Northbrook can give you much more

<sup>1</sup> To become Chief-Secretary for Ireland.

accurate information than I. Where I think we are weak is in torpedo boats, which can be easily increased, and I think that the falling off in our ability to obtain steel from the English trade for heavy guns is serious. The French are now, in this respect, far ahead of us.

*From Sir Thomas (now Lord) Brassey.<sup>1</sup>*

24, PARK LANE, W., November, 1884.

After a long consultation, I send you a programme which involves a moderate excess over the amount you named for next year, but which falls considerably below your limit in the succeeding years.

It has been agreed to by the Board in the absence of my chief.

I am sure you will readily believe that I have had no light task this week in reconciling the statesmanlike objections of my chief to increased expenditure on iron-clads with the demands of his Naval advisers, who are doubtless subject to an almost intolerable pressure from the Naval profession. I had quite a difficulty in preventing Lord Alcester<sup>2</sup> from resigning yesterday.

The amended programme looks a great deal better for the House of Commons. It throws more work on the contract vote, and is more in harmony with the report of our own departmental committee.

We here see Mr. Childers, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, endeavouring to restrain unnecessary expenditure in the two great spending departments—the Admiralty and the War Office; and it is remarkable that he himself had presided over each of these departments in turn. Search has been made for another instance of a statesman having held all these three offices, but without discovering one.

Trying to keep within reasonable limits the expenditure of Lord Northbrook and Lord Hartington, Mr. Childers fancied himself blamed on one occasion by Mr. Gladstone for not more vigorously resisting their demands, and a warm and lengthy correspondence ensued. Mutual

<sup>1</sup> Secretary to the Admiralty.

<sup>2</sup> First Sea Lord.

explanations set matters right, Mr. Gladstone in his wonted kindly manner observing, "I cannot wonder at your feeling pained ; you have most invidious duties to perform, and their pressure ought not to be aggravated by inconsiderate criticisms." To this he replied :—

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

December 18, 1884.

I am much obliged to you for writing to me so fully, and especially for your concluding sentences. But I do not think that I misunderstood you, and I am afraid that I myself was not very clear in my previous letter. What I meant to show was that for years I had been at work to reduce the enormous demands made and threatened by the (professional) Naval and Military authorities, and that I had succeeded in boiling them down to the comparatively small amounts now insisted upon. Having so far succeeded, your blame fell on me like a cold douche. . . .

We shall find, I expect, the battle renewed when we come to the Estimates and the debates on them. I am pressing the departments to have their estimates ready for circulation on the 20th of February ; this will mean the discussion of the outline early in January. You will have read a strong article in the *Times*, saying that our proposals are altogether inadequate.

This appears to be the general sentiment of the Liberal Press, both town and country, except perhaps the *Daily News*.

The proposals eventually adopted were an extra expenditure of £3,100,000 for shipbuilding, £1,600,000 for naval guns, and £825,000 on the coaling stations—a total of £5,525,000 to be spread over five years.

Twice during his tenure of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers presided at the nomination of sheriffs in the High Court, and the ancient customs on these occasions greatly interested him from the historical point of view. A correspondence which afterwards took place between himself and the Queen's Remembrancer (Sir Frederick Pollock)

illustrates a very distinct trait in his character—namely, his belief in the importance of not allowing inaccuracies of fact to pass unchallenged.

*To Sir Frederick Pollock.*

*December 24, 1887.*

I have been reading with very great pleasure your "Personal Remembrances." Will you allow me to correct a slight inaccuracy in vol. i. at p. 222? I, not Lord Coleridge, presided at the nomination of sheriffs in 1883. The morrow of St. Martin only occurred twice while I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, *i.e.* in 1883 and 1884, and I presided on each occasion.<sup>1</sup>

I remember that in 1883 there was some discussion (in the room where we met) as to the order in which we should go into Court, and that Lord Coleridge insisted on my going in first, and presiding. I shall not easily forget the proceedings, and especially Lord Coleridge's fun in connection with more than one application to be excused.

I think (but I am not sure) that he was not present in 1884.

*From Sir Frederick Pollock.*

59, MONTAGU SQUARE, W., *December 26, 1887.*

Many thanks for your note and correction of a very inexcusable blunder on my part. I cannot even claim in mitigation of it the sleepiness which is allowed occasionally to overcome the author of some "opus longum," for mine is a short enough little affair; and on turning to my note of the nomination of sheriffs in 1883, I find that it is correctly entered that you, as Chancellor of the

<sup>1</sup> By 14 Edw. III. st. 1, s. 7 (A.D. 1340), it was enacted "That no sheriff shall tarry in his bailiwick over one year, and then another convenient shall be ordained in his place, that hath land sufficient in his bailiwick, by the Chancellor, Treasurer, and Chief Baron of the Exchequer, taking to them the Chief Justices of the one Bench and of the other, if they be present;" and by 24 Geo. II. c. 48, s. 12, the ordaining was to take place on the morrow of St. Martin (November 12) at the Exchequer. These Acts existed till 1887, but the procedure is still the same. Since 1880 the jurisdiction of the Chief Baron has been wielded by the Lord Chief Justice.

Exchequer, presided, sitting for the first time in the centre of the Bench, and not on the extreme right, as had previously always been the custom, with the Lord Chancellor on your right, and Lord Carlingford as President of the Council on your left ; and as you mention you again presided in 1884.

I am rather ashamed of myself for having made a mistake in a matter on which I was particularly desirous of being correct, and in a matter in which I became interested years before I was appointed Queen's Remembrancer, from the question of precedence having been raised by Baron Parke upon the occasion of my father's first appearance at the nomination of sheriffs after he became Chief Baron.

I believe there is a race of demons whose especial business it is to be at the elbow of historians and writers of memoirs, and to make them go wrong.

Another case in illustration is referable to this period of his career. Mr. Childers found himself one morning depicted in *Truth* as the hero of an escapade in which he was credited with having lost official papers in a music-hall. The thing was not really seriously worth a grave denial ; Mr. Childers, however, could not pass it by, and with businesslike promptitude wrote a serious protest to the editor. The scathing pen of the member for Northampton is generally credited with direct responsibility for the statements which readers occasionally find about themselves in the pages of his journal. To these it may afford comfort to read the good-natured *amende* which the versatile editor made.

*From Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P.*

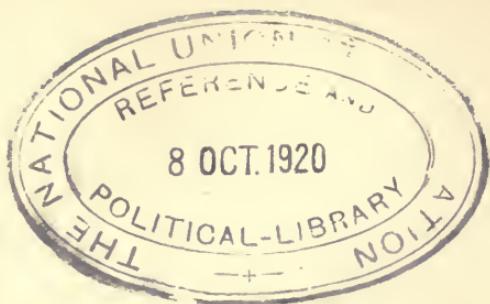
POPE'S VILLA, TWICKENHAM, October 9, 1882.

I have only just returned from abroad, and I have not seen a copy of *Truth* for the last month, as when one has every week to arrange a newspaper, one is too glad to forget its existence during a holiday. I did not even know that there had been a "photographic portrait" of you until I received your note. I had requested the gentleman who was writing these "portraits" to do so



*Maria, wife of Lord Eardley.  
Daughter of Sir John Eardley Wilmot*

*After Sir J. Reynolds.*



in a good-natured vein, and, as regards Liberals, in a somewhat eulogistic one. I am exceedingly sorry that he should have allowed his fancy to run riot, but this is the fault of all periodical writers. Facts are their stumbling-block. They are ready to sit down at a desk and write for any length of time, but they will never give themselves the trouble to verify anything which they fancy that they have heard. Should you think it desirable, I would find some way of contradicting the story about the lost paper, without of course mentioning that the contradiction comes from you. A story, like a *bon mot*, gets into general circulation, and is almost invariably put down to the wrong person.

Mr. Childers would often be at great pains to write, not necessarily over his own name, and correct misstatements in the press in matters of detail which few people would probably have troubled themselves about. The "high official" who edits the *Court Circular* was not exempt from his criticism, as is shown by the letter which he wrote to the *Times* in August, 1889, over the signature "M. P." on the subject of the incorrectness of the title "Emperor of Germany," as applied to the "German Emperor," in the first-named publication.

*To the Editor of "The Times."*

BATHS OF H—, GERMANY, August 15.

SIR,—Ever since the re-establishment of the German Empire in 1870, I have always been told to describe its head as the "German Emperor," not the "Emperor of Germany." Reading your interesting reports of the visit of the Emperor to England, I observe that you scrupulously follow this rule.

But I also observe that the *Court Circular*, which is understood to be edited by a high official connected with the Court, has as invariably during the Emperor's visit described him as the "Emperor of Germany." This has occasioned here no little surprise.

Possibly the insertion of my letter in the *Times* may lead to this misunderstanding being cleared up.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

M. P.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Times* took up the subject, showing clearly, by reference to article 4 of the Imperial Constitution, that Mr. Childers was right in his contention, the Brussels correspondent also of the same paper observing that the only constitutional title adopted in 1871 for the King of Prussia and his successors as heads of the German Empire is "Deutscher Kaiser."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE SUDAN.

1883-1885.

Hicks Pasha's Defeat—Mission of General Gordon—Fall of Berber—Battle of the Rival Routes—River Route adopted—Lord Wolseley to command—Fall of Khartoum—The Mahdi to be smashed—Russian Danger—Abandonment of the Sudan.

FROM the time of Lord Wolseley's arrival in Cairo, after Tel-el-Kebir, at the head of the English Army, Mr. Childers had viewed with misgiving the drift of affairs in the Sudan, and his correspondence with Lord Granville at this time discloses a feeling of distrust as to the wisdom of sending English officers in any military capacity with the expedition which the Khedive contemplated fitting out to put down the insurrection which had arisen. In any case he deprecated in his private letters to the Foreign Secretary the policy of drift.

“Our opinion, I think generally was,” he wrote,<sup>1</sup> “that we had no interest in keeping up the dependency of the Sudan on Egypt. We declined to allow any officers or men to go to the Sudan; although we ultimately allowed some officers to make inquiries. Gradually—I know little of the intervening steps—we have got beyond this. We have recognized apparently the employment of English officers there, and this heavy drain for the Sudan operations on Egyptian finance. . . . The tone of Sir E. Malet's telegrams clearly implies that

<sup>1</sup> To Earl Granville, June 8, 1883.

(directly or indirectly) we are to give General Hicks<sup>1</sup> instructions based on his representations to Sir Edward Malet. This seems to me a most serious question, requiring the immediate decision of the Government."

Meanwhile, on the 6th of June (two days before this note was penned) Hicks Pasha had adopted the resolution, after a Council of War held at Khartoum, of advancing against the Mahdi for the reconquest of Kordofan. He was at first successful, and inflicted a severe defeat on the rebels at Marabieh, but on the 3rd of November, misled by his guides, he and his army, after wandering about in the desert for three days and nights, were surrounded and annihilated, and the whole country south of Khartoum fell into the hands of the Mahdi.

As soon as the news was known in London, Sir Andrew Clarke (then Inspector General of Fortifications) forwarded to Mr. Childers the following letter which he had received from a friend and brother officer, adding:—

I need not say that, if England is to intervene, my advice would be to place the whole affair without reserve in Gordon's hands. If the Mahdi is a prophet, Gordon in the Sudan is a greater. He will be in London in a day or two, as he is *en route* to the Congo. How well I recollect his telling Baring when we were passing with Lord Ripon through Egypt that the action of the Cairo Government would lead to grief in the Sudan. I was gratified to hear Wolseley speak the other day in even stronger terms of admiration and respect for Gordon than even I would do.

*From Colonel Bevan Edwards<sup>2</sup> to Sir A. Clarke.*

WEST LODGE, FOLKESTONE, November 23, 1883.

My object in writing to you is because I know your recommendations will have great weight with the

<sup>1</sup> Hicks Pasha, a retired Indian Officer, who had entered the Egyptian service.

<sup>2</sup> Now General Sir James Bevan Edwards, K.C.M.G., R.E.; he had served in China under Gordon; M.P. for Hythe, 1895-99.

Government. Now, there is one man who is competent to deal with this question—Charlie Gordon. He would not work under the Khedive, but, if he was asked to assist the Khedive, working, if possible, directly under the Government at home, I think he would go. His name alone would do wonders; but no time should be lost. He should be given supreme power as Governor-General—with the local rank of lieutenant-general in the English army. If necessary, he should have at his disposal a division from India of two European and four or five native battalions. He would soon put matters to rights, and the difficulty would be got over much quicker by dealing promptly with it. Egypt might then abandon Kordofan and Darfur; but we are morally bound to see the Khedive safe in the rest.

The Government cannot afford to make another Transvaal business of this—the whole feeling of the country will be against them; by making Gordon supreme, he will settle the matter for them in a way that no one else could. If it is announced at once that the troops will not now be withdrawn, on the contrary, if necessary they will be reinforced; that Charlie Gordon has been appointed to assist the Khedive with supreme power, and authorized to ask for a division from India to be placed under orders, if he should deem it necessary—then the Government will reinstate themselves in favour with the country and all be well for them.

Mr. Childers forwarded this letter to Lord Granville and urged the employment of Gordon, but the answer was not encouraging.

*From Earl Granville.*

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, December 3, 1883.

Baring has consulted the Egyptian Government—they are afraid of employing Gordon, as being a Christian.

Public opinion, however, was too strong for Lord Granville and Sir Evelyn Baring, and on the 18th of January General Gordon's services were accepted on the terms that he should be independent of the Khedive and receive his orders from the English Government. The same evening

he left England, never to return. Three days later Mr. Childers wrote :—

*To Earl Granville.*

*January 21, 1884.*

I am asked a good many questions about Gordon. On some I do not mind being ignorant, but I should be glad if I might know, for my own information, what is to be his relation to those in authority in Egypt. Is he to be under Evelyn Wood, or under Baring; *i.e.* who will be responsible for him, and to whom will he be responsible?

*From Earl Granville.*

Gordon wished to be under orders of General Stephen-  
son, acting upon instructions from Baring.

But he wrote some draft proclamations from Macon in the railway, in which he describes himself as acting for her Majesty's Government and the Khedive.

The effect of Hicks Pasha's defeat was felt all over the Sudan. At Suakim, Osman Digna, a slave dealer thrown out of employment, raised the standard of revolt; and in December, 1883, totally overthrew Baker Pasha, who with 3600 Egyptians had been sent against him.

The English Government now sent out General Graham, who, after defeating Osman at El Teb and Tamai, urged that Gordon's co-operation should be sought in an immediate advance of a small force on Berber; but the General in Command in Egypt did not approve, and informed the Home Government that he could not recommend such a proposal.

Fierce attacks were now made on the Government, and three votes of censure were moved.

*From Viscount Halifax.*

*HICKLETON, February 13, 1884.*

Gladstone has made a capital defence of what has been done, and much of the attack on the Government is unfounded.

But you were wrong, if staying in Egypt at all, that you did not earlier enforce your will. Staying, you could not avoid the responsibility, to a great extent, of their acts, and if you had stopped them, say at Assuan or even at Khartoum, and occupied the seaports, you could have ensured the canal and stopped the slave trade, as there would have been no market for slaves.

I send you an extract of a letter which I received this morning. If anything of this sort occurred, Government must have been aware of it, and I think that I should have been so, too. I have no recollection of anything of the kind.

Let me know what you remember, that I may answer my correspondent with confidence.

#### EXTRACT.

When Gladstone moved those resolutions of his on the Bulgarian atrocities, I remember quite well the general fact that there was a strong pressure put upon both him and Hartington to prevent a split between them being made. I forget the details and who took part in it, but I am quite sure a successful attempt was made to prevent the two men appearing on opposite sides in a division. If I am not mistaken, this was accomplished by getting Gladstone to give up most of his resolutions and Hartington to vote for one of them.

*To Viscount Halifax.*

*February 14, 1884.*

Your criticism has great force. The real fact is that we found the war against the Mahdi in full swing, and were told that practically the Sudan Government was quite independent of Egypt, except that it had a subvention recognized by the law of liquidation.

We disliked the war, but hardly felt ourselves justified in interfering. Had we done so we should have had to decide on the strength of Hicks's army, where it should go, how much money he should have, what British officers should assist him, and the Sudan would have been as much under British management as Egypt.

We decided against this from the first, and in the papers printed a year ago (Egypt, No. 1, 1883), all this is clearly set forth. No one objected. In August there was a debate on our policy in Egypt, and again the special

danger of meddling with the Egyptian doings in the Sudan was clearly stated. Both Northcote and Bourke<sup>1</sup> spoke in the debate, but made no reference to this. Until Hicks's overwhelming defeat occurred (entirely unexpected by every one), no one objected to our declared policy of non-interference. Even then the Press and speakers in the country made no objection; and the first we heard of it was the other day.

I think we made one grave mistake: that is, after refusing leave to officers to go to the Sudan, not forbidding Hicks, who was a retired Indian, to go, and take others in the same position with him.

The Foreign Office seems to have slid into this without consulting others. At least, I was a party in November, 1882, to the prohibition, and was alarmed to find in May a number of officers in the Sudan, and Dufferin corresponding with Hicks.

Your correspondent is quite right. Gladstone's original resolutions were disapproved by us all (Chamberlain and Dilke were not then on the front bench), and at first he was obstinate.

On Sunday I went down to Grant Duff's to prepare the speech which I was requested to lead off with on Monday against the first resolution—and I did prepare it. When I came up on Monday for the debate, I was met with the news that Gladstone had yielded, and the split was averted.<sup>2</sup>

Among Mr. Childers's correspondence at this time there are not many letters to be found having reference to the Nile Expedition or the fall of Khartoum. This year, to the ordinary work of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was added the burden of Egyptian bankruptcy, and on the top of this came the outcry for a large outlay to increase the Navy and to complete the defences of the Empire. Removed from the War Office, he found little time for writing about anything except the many pressing matters of Finance. Some correspondence has been preserved—a few letters to and from Lord Northbrook and Sir John Adye are interesting as showing how the

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Connemara.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 245.

disagreement amongst the naval and military experts as to the best means for relieving Gordon resulted in the fatal delay on the part of the Government; but there is little fresh light thrown on the occurrences of this time of national anxiety.

*From General Sir John Adye.*

THE CONVENT, GIBRALTAR, *March 22, 1884.*

I know you will not mind my sending you a few lines about the Soudan, as I feel very uneasy and have done so all along as to the position of Gordon at Khartoum.

Anxious as the Government have been to avoid, as far as possible, assuming responsibility with regard to events in that part of the world, and which events are due to the misgovernment of the rulers of Egypt, still circumstances have, as it were, forced us to interfere; and now Gordon is at Khartoum, appointed by us, and Graham has also been acting on the Red Sea coast under our orders. We cannot end there and leave matters alone. As we have gone so far, we must now go farther, though most unwillingly. In my opinion, the results of Graham's victories should be followed up by opening the road to Berber—that is, we should now subsidize the tribes and should at once send out materials for a railway from Suakin to Berber, making the Arab chiefs responsible for its safety; and, by employing their people as labourers, we should, I think, soon have them all on our side. The rail would only be two hundred miles, and most of it, I presume, easy of construction. When once that line of communication has been established, the difficulty of retaining Khartoum will no longer exist. Small armed steamers should be sent out in pieces to ply between Berber and Khartoum. After Graham's victories I should think it would not require very large subsidies to induce the tribes between Suakin and Berber to ensure the safety of the road, and once the rail and telegraph are laid, its protection would be simple. The people of England are in an excited state, and if anything happens it will culminate.

On the 8th of April, Lord Wolseley laid certain plans for carrying out the relief of General Gordon before the Government. He recommended as essential the

concentration of 6500 British troops at Shendi ; and, after entering minutely into the consideration of the alternative routes available, he concluded, "I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the river route from Wady Halfa to Khartoum is infinitely preferable to any other."

In this opinion he was supported by the views of those who, like Sir John McNeill, Sir Redvers Buller, and Colonel W. F. Butler, could call to memory their experiences in the Red River Expedition of twenty-five years before.

But opposed to these were the views of many other equally experienced and distinguished officers.

Sir John Adye, Sir Andrew Clarke, and Major Cherm-side agreed as to the Suakim route ; Lord John Hay reported to the Admiralty that the boat expedition was impracticable, and finally Sir Frederick Stephenson, the general in command in Egypt, telegraphed that he also preferred the Suakim-Berber route.

On the 26th of May Berber fell into the hands of the rebels, and the Cabinet, now thoroughly aroused to the dangerous position of affairs at Khartoum, entered earnestly on the consideration of the best steps to be taken for the relief of General Gordon.

*To the Earl of Northbrook.*

*May 28, 1884.*

I do not feel at all easy about the expedition *via* Suakim to Berber. My first impression was in favour of the railway plan, in preference to a camel expedition that way, and to the Nile scheme ; but I confess I am alarmed by the magnitude of the proposals, now that we are face to face with it ; with the very meagre information on which we should have to base our justification. I have personally every confidence in Clarke, and he and your people will doubtless do the thing as well as possible ; but have you really considered the tremendous risk of carrying a railway, in three or four months, over a nearly waterless route, rising 1800 feet above the sea, in the tremendous heat of

the summer and autumn? It seems to me very like a leap in the dark; and, if it fails, not only *we* shall be discredited (which is comparatively a light matter), but the blow to the country in the face of Europe will be most serious.

I write to *you*, not only because you and I have taken generally the same line in these matters, but because your Indian experience makes you the best judge of us all. I do not know to what extent you have personally studied the details of the plan. I doubt whether any one else has in the Cabinet. However able Hartington's advisers may be, they are both sanguine and go-a-head men, but they should be cross-examined on every detail. The Admiralty have, after all, only to carry out what is wanted quickly and in the most convenient way to Suakim, and perhaps to help about water.

I am not disturbed by the money question *per se*. Parliament would, I think, enable us to pay two and a half or three millions if we prove its necessity. But this will have to be proved to two eager Oppositions, and a body of fifty or sixty suspicious Radicals. Can we say that we hold the proofs?

*From the Earl of Northbrook.*

May 30, 1884.

I do not think I have any better means of judging than you as to the feasibility of making a line of railway from Suakim to the high ground. I was very doubtful indeed at first, on account, first of the climate, secondly of the difficulty of defending the works. My doubts were removed by Major Chermside's telegram.

We (the Admiralty) could of course get freight for any materials, and arrange to condense water; as a department we have no other responsibility.

I share your misgivings, but what can we do better? It is the only route by which a force could get to Khartoum, and probably the best demonstration in support of Gordon—if he can be relieved by a demonstration.

All through May, June, and July the controversy raged, and months of precious time were lost while the advocates of the rival routes fought out their battle. At one time the Suakim-Berber party appeared to have carried the

day, for in June it was announced that her Majesty's Government had decided on taking preliminary steps for the construction of the railway, should they hereafter determine on such a measure.

Mr. Childers, however, appears to have been very doubtful as to how the construction of a short portion of a railway at Suakim could be justified unless, perhaps, as preparation for a possible contingency.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

June 7, 1884.

What I meant was that any expenditure on a railway out of Suakim, even if only a few miles long, was a new service, for which, in my opinion, Parliamentary sanction ought to be obtained by means of a supplementary Estimate, but I added that I feared this would raise the whole question of an expedition, and that it would be difficult to justify to Parliament a vote for the railway without stating of what, in our opinion, it would be the precursor.

We should thus be involved in a debate on the entire question, in which we should be obliged to indicate what we expected would follow the construction of the railway. The Opposition would, I think, strongly insist on this, and those below the gangway on our side who object to all expenditure in the Sudan would support them. As you say, we should defend the vote as a "mere preparation for a contingency," but this would not be very solid ground.

Of course, if it can be so defended I shall be only too glad not to disturb (as long as we can avoid doing so) the financial arrangements of the year.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS, June 9, 1884.

I think that we might add £300,000 to the Estimates without fresh taxation, but not more. We shall be able to speak with greater certainty two months hence.

I am afraid that I still fail to see how we can justify expenditure on a section of a railway and, at the same time, hold back the conditions defining the arrival of the contingency in preparation for which we construct the line —I follow your words.

What I am not satisfied about is what I would do if there were no Parliament. I have not yet seen fair proof of the reasonableness of the preparations. If their necessity were established, I would ask Parliament for much more.

At last, on the 8th of August, Lord Hartington made up his mind, and the Government obtained a Vote of Credit for £300,000, "in order to undertake operations for the relief of General Gordon, should they become necessary." The General (Sir F. Stephenson) commanding in Egypt was at once informed that steps were to be taken for occupying Wady Halfa by British troops; and five days later, after months of uncertainty and delay, it was definitely announced that the river route and boat expedition were adopted, that four hundred boats were being ordered at once, and that Major-General Earle was to take the command.

Sir Frederick Stephenson did not accept this decision without entering a protest. He informed Lord Hartington that he advised an early occupation of Dongola, but he considered the expedition in small boats, owing to the difficulties in the river, to be impracticable, and he again pressed on the Secretary of State his conviction that the Suakim-Berber route was the right one.

On the 26th of August Lord Hartington stated that he considered that it was unjust to ask him to be responsible for an operation which he considered impracticable; and, after reference to Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and Lord Northbrook, it was rather suddenly decided to send Lord Wolseley to take temporarily the chief command in Egypt.

*To the Marquis of Hartington.*

DUNPHAIL, N.B., August 27, 1884.

To-day's *Scotsman* contains a statement that Wolseley is going to Egypt to take the command of an expedition.

Will you kindly let me know whether this implies any change in the arrangements which you notified to Sir F. Stephenson in your despatches of the 15th instant, or whether it is only a substitution of Wolseley for General Earle? If it means a larger expenditure would you give me an idea of the contemplated cost, so far as it can be estimated, and tell me anything which, from a financial point of view, I should be interested in knowing?

Of course, in due time there will be an official correspondence between the War Office and the Treasury.

*From the Marquis of Hartington.*

WAR OFFICE, August 29, 1884.

Wolseley is going to Egypt to take the command of the troops there, not necessarily of an expedition. There is no change in the general arrangements notified to Stephenson in my despatches of the 8th, 15th, and 22nd. In fact, it is mainly in order to adhere to those arrangements that Wolseley is going out. There appeared to be a great deal of misunderstanding in Egypt as to the plan of operations which, principally on Wolseley's advice, we had adopted, and, as you will now see in the telegrams, Stephenson has repeatedly given it as his opinion that the small-boat plan is impracticable. We were working at cross purposes here and in Egypt, and we were endeavouring to perform the impossible task of directing the details of an expedition up the Nile from home.

I was so uneasy about this state of things, which I found in existence when I came up to town last week, that I communicated with Mr. Gladstone, Granville, and Northbrook, and obtained their authority to send out Wolseley to take the command in Egypt, and to direct all the preparations and arrangements for the expedition, should it take place. It was impossible for me to communicate with the whole Cabinet, without the loss of too much time.

This measure of itself will not involve any change in the scale of the operations (beyond the sending out of a considerable number of officers whom Wolseley wants), but I can scarcely say yet what the cost of the preparations which have already been made here and in Egypt will be. I have asked to have the earliest possible information on this subject, and as soon as I can say anything definite I will send it to you.

I think that in itself Wolseley's appointment may be an economical measure. He has a great aversion to embarking on a large expenditure for land transport, which would be the most costly of all preparations ; and, at all events, we shall henceforth be only spending money on one scheme instead of on two, which we were drifting into.

*To the Marquis of Hartington.*

August 31, 1884.

I am much obliged to you for your note of the 29th. I had no wish to be consulted before you adopted what appears to me to be the very wise step of sending Wolseley out ; but when I wrote to you the Cabinet copy of the instructions later than the 15th had not reached me, and I had no idea what Wolseley was going out to do.

*From Sir John Adye.*

GIBRALTAR, September 12, 1884.

As regards the expedition itself I have considerable doubts, and fear it will be long, costly, and tedious. As for the fighting part of it, I doubt if there will be any. The reports of Major Kitchener<sup>1</sup> from Debbeh, and of Chermside<sup>2</sup> from Suakim, as far as I gather, tend to prove that there is little cohesion or unity amongst the tribes ; and that is what I always anticipated. But to force 7000 British soldiers for 1600 miles or more against the stream, and over the various cataracts and rapids, must entail great difficulties, considerable time, and, I fear, be very costly ; and even when they have arrived they can only come back again.

Wolseley has a genius for organizing such an expedition, and revels in it, and although the time is rather short, I have no fear of his success.

I was aware that for months past he has been studying and urging the Nile route, but, with all the circumstances in view, I arrived long ago at a different conclusion. After Graham's victories had broken up the strength of the tribes near Suakim, it seemed to me that a free and judicious use of *backsheesh* would have enabled us to lay down a tramway to Berber. What I felt was that if we

<sup>1</sup> Now General Lord Kitchener.

<sup>2</sup> Now Major-General Sir Herbert Chermside.

once establish a route in that direction, we should be masters of the situation, and the money would have been expended in a permanent work, and the policy of the future would be almost entirely in our hands either to stay or go.

I was never in favour of a large military expedition, nor did I consider it necessary ; and that was why I urged that the money should be spent in a permanent benefit, and not on pushing forward British soldiers into the heart of Africa.

A railway is a civilizing element, and the money spent on it is not lost, whereas the cost of the present expedition must be great, and when the troops are withdrawn, as they must be before next spring, they will, I fear, leave no permanent results behind. As the tramway from Suakim was not undertaken in time, it of course left no alternative but the Nile route.

However, one thing I think is clear, namely that there is no organized opposition of a serious character in the Sudan. That Wolseley will succeed in all he attempts I feel sure.

The appearance of British soldiers in the various places up the Nile will have a great effect, and will prove our power, at all events for the time. I am still in favour of constructing the tramway from Suakim, not, of course, for the present expedition, but as a permanent solution.

The cordon on the neutral ground here still continues, but it has arrived at a more foolish result than originally. Because now they have cholera in Spain, whereas we are free, and yet they will not associate with us ! Unreasoning panic can hardly go farther.

I am not doing very well in a financial point of view. The Board of Health of Gibraltar are obliged to regulate our quarantine laws to suit the feelings of our nervous neighbours, consequently the number of steamers visiting the port is diminished considerably, and my harbour and other dues suffer. Fixed establishments run away with most of my revenue, so that there is no great margin for saving. In all other respects we are getting on very satisfactorily.

I hope you are enjoying a holiday after your arduous labours. The Peers, I should think, would shortly capitulate and pass the Bill,<sup>1</sup> and whether Wolseley's expedition was

<sup>1</sup> The Franchise Bill, which passed later in the year.

or was not the best solution of the Sudan difficulty, at all events the great anxiety has passed away. What always amused me is, that the jingoes and the stockjobbers told us that the Mahdi was marching on Cairo, whereas it now appears that Major Kitchener has arrived all alone within 250 miles of Khartoum and is received with enthusiasm. If one Englishman can cause so much pleasure, perhaps the presence of two would stop the insurrection!

The history of the British Army of late years is certainly one of wonderful adventure, and their present advance up the Nile will exceed all previous efforts.

*To Sir John Adye.*

September 26, 1884.

I have read your remarks on the prospects of the expedition with very great interest. I believe that your views are shared by a great many good authorities, if not the majority, at the War Office; and why Wolseley went from them, after at first supporting them, I do not know. I rather fear that the expense will be more serious than any one has estimated. But if the work is well and speedily done, this will be forgiven.

How silly Spain is about the cholera. Italy was as bad until a few days ago, maintaining a rigid cordon against absolutely healthy Switzerland, while she herself was suffering. It is one of the anti-British crazes of the Continent that we are to blame for the cholera, although there is not a shred of evidence that a British ship has brought it anywhere. . . .

I do not yet see any very clear indication of what the Autumn session will produce. There is in the north great enthusiasm about the Franchise Bill, but not very much in England, and the Irish only utilize it for their own party objects. I do not look forward with much satisfaction to the financial future.

The *Pall Mall Gazette's* furious demand for more Naval expenditure has been received with considerable approval, and we have a heavy claim to meet from the payers of local burdens. On the other hand, the revenue is sluggish, and Egypt will be costly, not only this year but in future. . . .

Early in October Lord Wolseley arrived at Wady Halfa with the advance party of the Nile Expedition, and

by Christmas he had pushed up the river as far as Korti. On the 4th of October Colonel Stewart and Mr. Power of the *Times*, who had been sent down from Khartoum by General Gordon, were murdered near Merawi.

*To his Son, Spencer.*

117, PICCADILLY, November 12, 1884.

I have yours of the 24th of October from Wady Halfa. You are, I imagine, by this time beyond Dongola, and I hope that all has gone well with you. I am glad that the plague of flies has diminished, and that you are back with your General. Your dates are rather alarming, and will make converts to the Suakim-Berber theory.

Trevelyan<sup>1</sup> left the Irish Office simply because his health and strength had broken down, and not in the least as a concession to the Nationalists. His successor<sup>2</sup>—who has nerves of iron—will be much more formidable to them. . . .

I have had a good deal of anxiety about Egyptian finance, and now we have some heavy supplementary Estimates before us for your expedition and Bechuanaland.

December 5, 1884.

We were very glad to receive your letter of the 11th of November from Dongola. F. had sent us yours of the previous week, so we have full particulars of your march from Wady Halfa and of your life at Dongola. Your quarters must be fairly comfortable, and you seem to have enough amusement to keep you going. I wonder whether you will make your desert start from Ambukol or Merawi; hardly, I imagine, from Debbeh. But I put absolute faith in your General, and, as you know, I am never curious about "intentions."

I have not very much to tell you. To-day the Lords have passed the Franchise Bill, and it receives the Royal Assent to-morrow. Last night we read the Redistribution Bill a second time. You will have known its outlines long ago; but it will be satisfactory for you to know that it leaves Pontefract one member. I suspect, however, that

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Trevelyan, M.P., resigned the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. (now Sir Henry) Campbell-Bannerman.

the 15,000 limit for disfranchisement will be stoutly attacked by Tory democrats and some Radicals, and we may be disfranchised by 20,000 or 25,000 being the limit.

We have made a great increase in Naval votes and in Army votes for the Navy. It is not a very clear record for us.

By Christmas a strong force was concentrated at Korti, and soon after General Sir Herbert Stewart pushed forward across the Desert: on the 17th of January he inflicted a severe defeat on the rebels at Abu Klea; but it was too late, and on the 26th Khartoum fell.

On the 5th of February, the news of the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon reached London.

*To his Daughter (now Mrs. Stephen Simeon).*

117, PICCADILLY, February 8, 1885.

I had intended to write to you some days ago, although I have nothing from you to answer. But this terrible news from Khartoum has given me ten hours a day work, with arrears even then, and I have had no time for letters.

Last Wednesday I went to York and spent Thursday in visiting at Knottingley. While I was there, I got a telegram with the Khartoum news. I came up that night. On Friday and yesterday we had long Cabinets.

Seventy-two hours sooner and Gordon would have been relieved! Not that Wolseley did not do his best. Details are still uncertain, and we are not sure of Sir Charles Wilson's safety. But the Cabinet have decided that Khartoum must be retaken, either now or after the hot weather, *i.e.* about October. The latter will be long to wait, and poor F. will feel the suspense. The Tories will abuse us till the election, but they are divided about turning us out, which they can easily do.

*From Viscount Halifax.*

HICKLETON, February 13, 1885.

I do not think that the Government will be turned out, but there is an ominous-looking article in last night's *Pall*

*Mail* as to the *cold* fit coming over the Radicals and possibly over Chamberlain. All looks as if you would have a very disagreeable meeting of Parliament. I have a long letter from Lord Grey<sup>1</sup> couched in no measured terms, who says—and there is some truth in it—that if you do not make a settlement of the Soudan you will be guilty of wilful murder, in the number of men who have been killed there to no purpose.

Do keep me informed of how things look.

Lord Ripon has been here, giving a good account of everything in India, but a little bit upset that our difficulties in Egypt will make the Russians very exacting on the Afghan frontier.

Parliament assembled on the 19th of February. The Government, greatly damaged by the fall of Khartoum, was severely attacked, and a vote of censure, moved by the Leader of the Opposition, was only defeated by 302 to 288. The forebodings of Lord Ripon proved to be only too well grounded, for though the Government had escaped actual defeat, they now were exposed to peril from an entirely new quarter.

Russia and England had appointed a joint Boundary Commission to define the Afghan frontier; pending their deliberations, news came on the 21st of February that the Russians were advancing on Penjdeh; and a month later, so acute was the crisis, that a Cabinet was hastily summoned within the precincts of the House, and two Army Corps were ordered to be mobilized in India. The Reserves were warned for service, and on the 8th of April further news of an attack by Russia on the Afghan forces produced a panic in the City. The Prime Minister described the attack as bearing "the appearance of an unprovoked aggression." And on the 21st a vote of Credit for £11,000,000 was announced in both Houses; and now was disclosed for the first time an intention on

<sup>1</sup> His brother-in-law; Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1846-1852.

the part of the Government to evacuate the Sudan ; the imminent peril in Asia justified, in the opinion of Mr. Childers, a reconsideration of the decision to "smash the Mahdi." Among his papers was a rough draft of the following memorandum which had not been signed.<sup>1</sup>

It is proposed [he wrote] that the expedition to Khartoum should be abandoned, that the operations on the route from Suakim to Berber and the construction of the railway should also be discontinued, and that the Sudan, except the littoral, should be evacuated.

The reason for this entire change of policy is stated to be the failure of the plans, to carry out which that policy was adopted two months ago.

Even if I were prepared to admit that failure I should doubt whether we were the right Government to carry out so sudden a *volte face*. But I do not think that this failure is proved.

There is, however, one motive for so great a change which would have weight with me. I could not refuse to be party to the evacuation of the Sudan if the troops were to be removed to India, to strengthen our defence against, and possibly to avert, Russian aggression. My own belief is that the army now in the Sudan might with great advantage be sent to strengthen the army of India. If, then, it should be decided to declare that the object of the evacuation of the Sudan was to move the army to India, I should concur in that decision.

I do not mean that the whole force need at once be so moved. The battalions forming part of the expedition up the Nile should, if this decision were carried out, commence as soon as possible their march towards Egypt proper, and as large a force as may be required for the defence of Egypt should be left on the Lower Nile and at the principal towns, as purely military considerations may demand.

But the whole of the Suakim force, except such troops as may be required for the defence of the town, until it be occupied by Italians or Turks or British marines, should with reasonable speed be embarked for India.

So much of the Expeditionary Force on the Nile as is not wanted for the defence of Egypt might be embarked at Alexandria for the Mediterranean garrisons or held in readiness elsewhere for Indian service.

<sup>1</sup> It is docketed "Not sent out."

What, in my opinion, is essential, if the Sudan is abandoned, is that we should categorically declare what our object is, and strengthen our preparations in India against the dangers with which we are threatened.

*From Sir John Adye.*

GIBRALTAR, April 29, 1885.

I hardly like troubling you with letters when you have so many anxieties already and not much spare time for correspondence. I am watching with great interest the state of affairs in Afghanistan ; and although they are apparently very threatening, I still hope for peace. My hope lies in the fact that our Government have no aggressive feelings, and therefore desire a peaceable solution, but of course are determined to settle and maintain the frontier of Afghanistan as the natural bulwark of our Indian Empire to the north-west.

Again, I presume that the Emperor of Russia and his Minister are opposed to war. But there is doubtless a strong aggressive party in Russia (and at times in England we are not free from it), and the danger I presume is, that the Emperor may not feel able to snub and reject the advice and influence of this aggressive party. The condition of Russia is so unsound, and the character of the Emperor may not be sturdy enough to allow him to have his way, therefore war may arise. Should it unhappily do so, I think we can not only feel that it has been forced upon us, but we can feel that the nation is united, and that the people of our colonies and of India are with us. Again, we are the great military power in the East ; we are also powerful at sea, and financially very far stronger than Russia.

Should war arise, we should make every exertion to strengthen Herat and pour in food, guns, and munitions. An Anglo-Indian army of sixty thousand men should march on Herat *via* Candahar. The Bamian Pass to the north of Cabul should be fortified and defended. The passes to the north of Cashmere and Gilgit should be watched. They could easily be defended. . . .

If war is to come, Russia should have it with a vengeance. Her lines of communication are so long that every effort should be made to cut them at every point.

*From Viscount Halifax.*

HICKLETON, April 13, 1885.

I agree with Gladstone that a demonstration of sending troops to India would be more likely to produce war than peace. We really depend for peace on the good disposition and peaceful intentions of the Government at St. Petersburg. Their officers are sure enough to provoke war. We ought, therefore, to be very careful not to irritate their pride in any way. The Emperor Nicholas was partly provoked into the Crimean War by an offence to his *amour propre*. Nor do we gain much: any troops to be pushed forward to aid the Afghans must be those already on the frontier, and the troops sent to India will replace them in the stations vacated.

Troops in Egypt and Suakim are already half way to India, and could very soon be at Bombay or Kurrachee. Therefore, for *Indian* purposes keep your troops where they are—at hand but not demonstrative.

In announcing the Vote of Credit, Mr. Gladstone had delivered a carefully prepared and written speech, in which he stated, without ever mentioning Russia, that all the resources, as far as possible, including the forces of the Sudan, would be available for service whenever they might be required. But he added that the vote would not include provision for further offensive operations in the Sudan, nor for military preparations for an advance on Khartoum.

On the 4th of May, however, the crisis passed away, and arbitration became possible.

*To Sir John Adye.*

117, PICCADILLY, May 9, 1885.

I was very glad to get your note, just as we were on the point of coming to terms with Russia. The chances of peace are now very great, although we are not quite out of the wood, thanks to the extravagance of certain leading Tories, and the reckless mischief-making of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

If we unfortunately fail at the last moment, you will see that we shall neglect nothing to bring it to a successful issue. "Non cauponantes bellum sed belligerentes" has been a maxim always ringing in my ears. I think on a small scale I followed it in 1882.

I am very busy with my Budget, which the Tories are trying to damage with the aid of the publicans.<sup>1</sup>

I have been on the sick list for a week, but am now better, and I trust I shall be in my place on Monday.

The retirement from the Sudan was carried into effect, the troops were withdrawn from Dongola to Assuan, and Wady Halfa was made the frontier town of Egypt. This policy of withdrawal was vehemently attacked, but a hostile motion by Lord George Hamilton was rejected by 290 to 260.

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, Chap. XVI.

## CHAPTER XV.

## EGYPTIAN FINANCE.

1884-1885.

Bankruptcy of Egypt—Failure of the First Conference—Lord Northbrook's Mission—The Second Conference—Agreement of the Powers—Guaranteed Loan for £9,000,000—Financial Credit restored—Dawn of Prosperity for Egypt.

WHEN Mr. Childers went to the Treasury from Pall Mall the state of Egyptian finance was more precarious than at any previous period; at the close of the war of 1882 enormous claims had been put forward for damage to property done during the burning of Alexandria, and a Commission had assembled to investigate and assess the indemnities. Egypt was in the darkest of those "years of gloom" which Sir Alfred Milner has so graphically depicted, and when the report of the Commission was issued the culminating point may be said to have been reached. During the debate on the Vote of Censure in February, 1884, in stating the future policy of the Government in regard to Egypt Mr. Childers had said that one of their chief objects was "to restore as far as we can the finances of Egypt, which have been burdened with the expenses resulting from the disturbances at Alexandria and the operations in the Sudan." His correspondence shows that he early appreciated the gravity of the situation.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

January 16, 1884.

This is a very serious question, affecting our finance in more than one way, about which I should be glad to see you. I mean whether anything, and if so what, should be done for the finances of Egypt.

It is quite clear to me that we shall be strongly pressed to do something ; and that unless we take up a clear and solid position from the first, we may drift into serious mischief. It is so very large a question that I should like to speak to you before making any detailed investigation.

He had meanwhile been in correspondence with the financial authorities in Cairo.

*To Mr. Alonzo Money.<sup>1</sup>*

January 17, 1884.

I have your interesting paper on Egyptian finance. It has been printed, and is very clear and intelligible.

It seems to me that there are three lines of policy between which we shall have to choose.

(1) Proclaim our intention to stay till we have set the country on its legs, carry on meanwhile the government through Egyptian Ministers, but do all we can to effect reforms. Egypt would have to struggle against heavy debt for some time, but would recover some day, and then we should leave.

(2) Proclaim a protectorate, or something of that kind, and take the finance of Egypt into our own hands, making some arrangement to their (moderate) advantage with the bondholders, and, having settled with them, give Egypt the benefit of our credit and our autocratic administration. France would be bought out by a fair premium to her bondholders.

(3) Steer a middle course, leaving France and the bondholders *in statu quo*, but pulling Egypt out of the mire by some such plan as you propose, using general language about the length of our occupation.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Alonzo Money, K.C.M.G. ; he had been a member of the Bengal Civil Service from 1843-1878, and was at this time British Commissioner on the Egyptian "Caisse de la Dette."

I know no fourth plan. The last would, I think, most resemble what we did for Turkey, when we guaranteed her War Loan. We set her on her legs with a vengeance, and she never stopped borrowing and wasting till she blew up.

The second would make Egypt a part of the British Empire, governed by Parliament. Nothing of the kind has ever been tried.

The first is the natural development of the last fifteen months' policy.

I will not forget your second letter. But the grave question between the three lines of policy I have indicated must first be settled.

At present there is no intention to have Englishmen as Egyptian Ministers.

Please don't understand me as preferring any of these three policies. I watch and wait.

*From Sir Evelyn Baring (now Viscount Cromer).*

CAIRO, February 26, 1884.

I am afraid that we have been working at cross purposes, as is sometimes unavoidable with people at a distance from each other, particularly when everything is done by telegraph.

I was very strongly impressed with the evils of delay in settling this Egyptian financial business, and it seemed to me that by far the most speedy way of settling the whole thing would be for some one to go home from here rather than for any one to come from London to Cairo.

I thought the next best thing was to send Vincent<sup>1</sup> and Blum<sup>2</sup> home. Their absence for a month or so would not cause any inconvenience. The big matters would have stood over, and arrangements could be made for carrying on the current work.

I did not, however, know till I got Lord Granville's telegram this morning that you wished to go into the whole of the detail. (I am very glad that you are going into it.) Neither did I know that Government contemplated such a long delay as two months.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Edgar Vincent, K.C.M.G.; then Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government.

<sup>2</sup> Blum Pasha.

There will be a great deal of discontent at the delay ; but I know from experience what preparing a Budget is, and I can well understand that you cannot give the time earlier.

Under these circumstances the advantages of my plan fall to the ground, or rather they are unattainable. I expect Vincent will have to go home eventually, but, as there is to be delay, it will be an advantage for Carmichael<sup>1</sup> to come out first.

(It will take him all his time to master the whole question in a fortnight, unless he is already up to it.)

I need hardly say that every facility will be given to Carmichael, or whomever you send out, to acquire all the information possible.

I do not think I ever had such a tough nut to crack as this Egyptian finance.

The first dilemma is this. You naturally want, and I want, certain information so as to show exactly how the facts of the case stand. The public also expect that if any plan is put forward, those who put it forward should be able to say that, as far as they know, no further changes will be necessary.

On the other hand, a long delay in settling the situation is very much to be deprecated.

It is next door to impossible to conciliate these conflicting ideas. On several very important points, accurate information is not, and, under the circumstances, cannot be forthcoming—and that from no fault of the financial department, but because the political situation does not admit for the moment of accurate estimates being framed. So many doubtful questions remain outstanding, *e.g.*—What is going to be done with Harrar? Who is to garrison the ports of the Red Sea? What is going to be done with the Egyptian army and gendarmerie? At present the organization of both bodies is in a state of flux. What military force will be necessary to guard Egypt proper? Are the tribes on the frontier to be subsidized? Is Egypt to pay anything to keep the Sudan quiet? I have just received a telegram from Gordon asking that Egypt should pay £20,000 a year for the future Sudan army! Again, what will the new

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Carmichael ; at that time private secretary to Mr. Childers, afterwards M.P. for Glasgow (St. Rollox). He had been attached to the Commission of Liquidation in 1880.

taxes yield? There are no facts to go on; any estimate must be little better than conjecture.

I could enumerate a string of other questions, to which it is for the moment difficult to give precise answers, but which all bear on the financial situation.

The main question, however, the English Government has to decide is this—who is to be sacrificed, the bond-holders or the English taxpayers? You will either have to reduce the rate of interest on the debt or bear the expense of the army of occupation. The alternatives are exceedingly unpleasant, but they have to be faced. In point of justice I think the bondholder should certainly go to the wall. But of course the difficulties, from an international point of view, of reducing the rate of interest, are very great indeed.

*From Sir Evelyn Baring.*

CAIRO, March 4, 1884.

Vincent leaves on Thursday. He might have left earlier, but he would have had to go by Brindisi, and would have been delayed five days by quarantine, so it comes to the same thing.

I must leave him to explain to you the figures. I cannot profess to have gone into them with sufficient thoroughness to guarantee their accuracy. I propose only to make some general remarks, in the hope that they may be of some use to you.

In the first place, as regards the administrative expenses of the Government. There can be no doubt that during the prosperous year 1881—which followed the Law of Liquidation—sufficient control was not exercised over the expenditure. It was *allowed to increase unduly*; and you will know how much more easy it is to increase expenditure in prosperous times than to bring it down again to its original level in normal times. I have insisted on considerable economies. Looking merely at what is absolutely necessary for the efficiency of the service, further economies, amounting perhaps to £80,000 or £100,000 a year, might be made. But this would involve sending away a large army of *employés*. Nubar does not like facing the unpopularity of this measure. Rivers Wilson can tell you the lesson he had on this subject some five years ago. I must confess also that when I came to learn that there was a question of sending away some 1100 *employés*—clerks,

servants, etc.—which means (at five per family) touching the pockets of from five to six thousand very poor people, I was obliged to admit that, in the face of the great discontent and poverty here, the measure would not be a wise one to carry out suddenly and at once. Whatever is done in this direction must be done gradually. Unfortunately, also, if the subject is touched seriously it is impossible not to fall very heavily on the natives. There are some highly paid Europeans whose services have been already dispensed with ; others should, if possible, be dismissed or have their salaries reduced. But outside a few appointments, which particularly strike the eye, the employment of Europeans is really more a political than a financial question. Financially speaking, they are often—even when highly paid—an economy. The real economy would consist in getting rid of the army of native clerks, servants, etc., who have been jobbed into places by successive Ministers, and who are, without a doubt, far more numerous than the real necessities of the administration demand.

As regards the total figure necessary for administrative expenses, six and a half millions (including tribute) is about the right sum. I know this from my former Egyptian experience. When you come to look into the detail, you will find that economies may perhaps be made in some directions, but, *per contra*, an increase of expenditure in other directions is unavoidable. On every side the Egyptian Government is being pressed to undertake reforms—judicial, sanitary, etc., which all cost money.

When, however, I say that six and a half millions is about the figure for administrative expenses, it must be borne in mind—

(1) That the amount of the Sudan expenses is exceedingly doubtful. After the evacuation there will certainly be some expenses in the way of subsidizing the tribes, etc.

(2) That we know very little of what the future expense of holding the Red Sea ports will be.

(3) That Wood's<sup>1</sup> army is in a state of transition, and that it is very difficult at present to estimate its ultimate cost.

(4) That the six and a half millions does not include the pension of Hicks's army.

I wish to draw your very serious attention to this latter point, which is one of very great importance. The

<sup>1</sup> Sir Evelyn Wood, at that time Sirdar.

present pension law in Egypt is perfectly monstrous. It is astonishing that it was not changed immediately after the Law of Liquidation. The widow and relations of a deceased *officer* or *soldier* have a right to his full pay for life, and, I believe, in some cases for the lives of children. If this is carried out some £200,000 a year will be added to the expenditure on account of Hicks's army, not to speak of Baker's losses. This is in addition to the ordinary charge, which has enormously increased since 1880. Pray discuss this very important subject fully with Vincent. A law having retrospective effect is always an awkward business. But I really see no other way out of the difficulty. A pension, under existing rules, is now recoverable in a court of law.

As to revenue. Vincent puts the whole (assigned and non-assigned) at £9,157,000. He only takes the new taxes at £100,000. This is low, and the railway estimate is also very moderate.

On the other hand, optimism has been the besetting sin of all previous arrangements, and I would not advise you to strain the estimate so much.

About the revenue. There are, no doubt, several taxes which are very bad, and in respect to which reform—if only the money were forthcoming—is very desirable; but the real thing the country wants is *water*. Everywhere the people say the same thing, "We don't so much mind the taxes, but give us water." There can be no doubt that Moncrieff<sup>1</sup> could spend a million or so in a manner which would be eminently productive. Pray think of this.

The indemnities are a different question. So far as the equity of the matter is concerned, a reduction of twenty per cent. is, to my mind, fair enough. I shall be anxious to hear whether you think it possible.

*To Sir Evelyn Baring.*

*March 7, 1884.*

... Thank you for writing to me so fully. . . .

I have quite accepted your decision, and I shall give as much time as I can spare from the Budget (about which there are a good many hard nuts to crack) to consider

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff, K.C.M.G., Permanent Under-Secretary for Scotland; then Under-Secretary of State for Public Works at Cairo.

with Vincent what can be done. Certainly it would be a very great advantage to be able to confer with you here, but that is out of the question. I trust you are a little relieved by Egerton's<sup>1</sup> assistance. I strongly urged Lord Granville to send you help, as you have been doing three men's work for some time, and I am glad he selected so clear-headed an assistant to you. I am not quite sure that we shall have to "sacrifice" either the bond-holders or the British taxpayer. It is premature to say now, but I think I see how the former may be really benefited and the latter not damnified. But until I see Vincent I can say no more. If you or even Money were with him I should feel more comfortable.

In the beginning of March the investigations of the Commission on the Alexandrian Indemnities were concluded, and a report was presented showing the liabilities of the Egyptian Government to amount to four and a quarter millions sterling. Mr. Childers at once hastened to apprise the Prime Minister of the gravity of the case. Mr. Gladstone replied that Mr. Childers would have to frame the outline of a scheme, which, he assumed, must touch the Law of Liquidation ; and that the case required immediate attention, as every day's delay meant aggravation of the evil. To this Mr. Childers replied :—

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*March 21, 1884.*

I do not think it is a question of days. In the first place, I could make no absolute proposal until I have consulted Mr. Money, who will not be here within a week's time ; and, secondly, what I have written to you hardly differs from what I warned you of before the opening of the session. I propose, with your leave, to write (when my inquiries are complete) a memorandum giving the financial position rather more fully than in my note to you, and setting out the difficulties—which are *enormous*—in the way of a satisfactory solution. This I would either send to you and Lord Granville or to the whole Cabinet ;

<sup>1</sup> Consul-General in Egypt ; now Sir Edwin Egerton, K.C.B.

and, after discussion with you, I would write a second memorandum showing possible solutions: I hope you will approve of this method of action. It is unlucky that this question and that of Irish Land purchase come upon me at so busy a moment as now.

Tied down by the Law of Liquidation (the charter of its creditors) the Egyptian Government could of itself do nothing to meet the enormous liabilities for the Alexandrian fires. The only method was by way of a loan; and to raise a loan required the consent of all the Powers.

The alarming statement of the facts so aroused the Cabinet that a report was ordered to be drawn up on the whole subject of Egyptian Finance. On the 22nd of April this statement was circulated among the Great Powers, and on the 1st of May it was announced that as a first step towards restoring the shattered finances of Egypt a Conference of the Powers had been arranged to consider some change in the Law of Liquidation, in order to raise a loan of £8,000,000, urgently required to meet the Alexandrian indemnities.

On the 28th of June the delegates of the Great Powers met in London. Lord Granville was elected president and each Power was represented by its Minister—Mr. Childers's old college friend, M. Waddington, representing France; in addition the Chancellor of the Exchequer attended for England and M. de Blignières for France. The report drawn up by an English Commission on the Financial Condition of Egypt showed the state of affairs to be—

Revenue	...	...	...	...	£8,855,000
Expenditure	...	...	...	...	9,231,000

Leaving a deficit of £376,000, including the interest and sinking fund on the proposed loan of £8,000,000.

On Mr. Childers fell the brunt of the technical work

of this conference on behalf of England (how fortunate for him that, from his earliest days, French had come almost as easily to him as his mother tongue), but from the outset the divergence of opinion between the French and English delegates was very marked ; and on the figures given by the English Commission it was soon evident that there was little likelihood of an agreement, the French asserting that instead of a deficit there was really a surplus of £220,000.

*From Mrs. Childers's Journal.*

*July 16.*—Dinner and evening party (at home). Mr. Bright dined, and was so pleasant. We had all the financial experts and the Ambassadors of Germany, Austria, and Russia. The Austrian had a long business talk with Hugh. Also M. Barrère. Hugh says he is really the cleverest of the three French experts.

At the fourth meeting M. Waddington stated that France could not agree to any proposal for the reduction of the interest on the debt ; nor could any understanding be come to between France and England as to Mr. Childers's proposal that the expenses of administration should take precedence before the interest of the creditors.

*From M. Waddington.*

*August 1, 1884.*

I enclose a final proposal which I have just been authorized to make at the Conference to-morrow, not without much difficulty. You will perceive that we make important concessions, and I trust you will think the proposal acceptable. Pray communicate it to your colleagues, as I have no one at this hour to make copies or send.

*From Mrs. Childers's Journal.*

*August 1.*—Hugh had a frightfully hard day's work : incessant strain of very severe thought. He came home

to dinner, but had to return to the House at 9.30. I found him in his study later with the French ultimatum just arrived. Certainly H. has worked hard, and done his best to conciliate, while remaining firm.

*To M. Waddington.*

*August 2, 1884.*

I found your letter awaiting me when I returned home last night. I had hoped that your proposal would have had my last for a basis ; but I am sorry that we cannot accept it.

It was now quite apparent that there was no prospect of any arrangement, and so at last, after seven sittings (on the 2nd of August), Lord Granville stated that no satisfactory basis of agreement had been arrived at, and abruptly announced that the Conference was dissolved.

The Conference having broken down, the British Government was now left alone to deal on its own responsibility with bankrupt Egypt. While, therefore, Lord Wolseley was being despatched to superintend the necessary operations for the relief of General Gordon, Lord Northbrook was on the same day sent to Egypt to report and advise on the steps which should be taken to meet the pressing necessities of the financial crisis.

*To Sir John Adye.*

*August 6, 1884.*

. . . The failure of the Conference leaves us freer than ever, and Northbrook goes to Egypt to settle what *we* should do about Egyptian finance. Now that France has over-reached herself, there will be a little braggadocio and some sneers from Varzin, but we shall take our own line now.

Waddington was in an altogether false position. He saw no objection to our terms, but the uproar in the French Chamber a month ago prevented him and M. Ferry from acting independently. . . .

The selection of Lord Northbrook was attacked in Parliament by Lord Randolph Churchill, who took the

opportunity of the Appropriation Bill to discuss the general conduct of affairs by the Ministry, and in the course of his remarks observed :—

“ In regard to the noble lord's appointment, I will make one remark that has not as yet been made. The public service of this country has hitherto been uniformly free from the least connection with the commercial and financial private enterprises of the City of London or of the great commercial centres of the country, and up to the time of the present Government, the Foreign Office has been scrupulously fair in this respect. Now I do hold, as a general statement of public policy, and without making any particular charge, that the appointment of Lord Northbrook is a departure from that sound general rule. There is no use whatever in concealing from the House or the public that Lord Northbrook is closely connected with the great financial house of Baring. If Lord Northbrook had gone out by himself, the objection I am making might seem to be strained, though I should still consider the appointment to be bad: but when I recollect that Lord Northbrook is going out in company with Sir Evelyn Baring, and that, therefore, two members of the great house of Baring are to be entrusted, so far as I can make out, with the sole disposal and almost unlimited control of England's political and financial interests in Egypt, I say that the appointment ought never to have been made, that members of that house ought to have been excluded, because of the fact that they are members of that financial house who are being entrusted with those duties. I should like to point out, in this connection, that there literally would be no difference whatever in sending out two members of the house of Rothschild to sending out two members of the house of Baring. The two are almost equal in greatness and in their great pecuniary interest in the East; and it stands to reason, that if her Majesty's Government had proposed—supposing a member of the house of Rothschild, by circumstances and his public position, fitted to undertake the task—to send out such a member, there would have been a great cry of displeasure from the House of Commons and the country. But there would have been no difference between the position of Rothschild and Baring; and I hold that this mission of the two Barings to Egypt with the immense powers which have

been entrusted to them, and knowing the enormous interest which the house of Baring has in the East, is a departure from that sound and scrupulous care, which, until the days of the present Government, has always been observed by Administrations to keep separate public interest from private enterprise."

To this attack Mr. Childers replied :—

"The noble lord has said that Lord Northbrook's appointment was ridiculous, and a transparent evasion of our duty; and he went on to say that his ground of objection to Lord Northbrook's appointment was that he was connected with the great house of Baring. [Lord Randolph Churchill: "One of the objections."] I think he afterwards used the words that Lord Northbrook was a member of the house of Baring, and he went on to say that, considering the financial position of that house and the financial interest that house had in the affairs of Egypt, Lord Northbrook ought not to have been sent to Egypt as her Majesty's Commissioner on the present occasion. . . . And then the noble lord went on to ask, what would be thought if a member of the house of Rothschild were sent out to advise on the affairs of Egypt? I tell the noble lord that there is no foundation for that statement. Lord Northbrook's position historically is, that he is the son of a most distinguished member of parliament, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Francis Baring, and that he has no connection whatever with the commercial house of Baring. Lord Northbrook is as free from fault in that way as the noble lord would be if any one were to throw in his face that he was a member of the house of Churchill. What would the noble lord have said when Lord Melbourne made Sir Francis Baring Chancellor of the Exchequer? I suppose he would have said that Lord Melbourne had selected as Chancellor of the Exchequer a member of the house of Baring, and that he had no right to do so. [Lord Randolph Churchill: "Certainly."] Nobody else said so, or would have dreamed of saying so. Lord Northbrook's connection with the house of Baring is, it is true, that he is a member of the highly respectable family of Baring, but with the firm of Baring Brothers, and the commercial transactions of that house, he has no more to do than I have."

*From Sir Evelyn Baring.*

*August 15, 1884.*

I must write a line to thank you sincerely for your very generous defence of me in the House of Commons. I need hardly say how pleased I was to read your most kind remarks.

I hope you are now enjoying your holiday, as I am. If mountain air and absolute idleness will help me to throw any fresh light on those abominable figures we know so well, I think I ought to be well prepared when I get back to Egypt.

*To Sir Evelyn Baring.*

*August 22, 1884.*

I hope I may conclude from your note of the fifteenth, which reached me yesterday, that you are all the better for Styrian air and rest. You required the latter greatly. I am here in a fairly good grouse country, and I hope to get to a deer forest next week.

I was very glad of the opportunity of saying what I did in reply both to Sir R. Peel<sup>1</sup> and to Lord Randolph. We had a pleasant time of *camaraderie*, which made up for the dullest figures I ever had to learn.

I hope you will be able to counteract the wiles of Barrère, and the devices of Derenthal and his great master.<sup>2</sup>

*From the Earl of Northbrook.*

CAMESKY, KINGUSSIE, N.B., *August, 14, 1884.*

Thank you very much for your excellent and complete answer to the somewhat mischievous attack Randolph Churchill made on Evelyn Baring and me the last night of the session. I have, of course, nothing to do with Baring Brothers' affairs, and I don't believe they have any concern with Egypt.

Do you think you will be able to find some work as assistant private secretary (without pay) for Sir Edward Grey when Parliament meets? He has been working with Evelyn Baring during the Conference, who gives a very favourable report of his ability and application.

He is very keen on politics, and took the chair with

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Huntingdon.

<sup>2</sup> Bismarck.

considerable success at a meeting in support of the Government the other day at Alnwick. I send you a letter from Canon Creighton,<sup>1</sup> who is a very good judge, as to the effect he produced.

Therefore I think I may safely prophesy that he would do you no discredit ; while, on the other hand, I am sure that he would gain more by working with you than with any one else in the Cabinet.

Sir Edward Grey was appointed one of Mr. Childers's private secretaries, and retained that post till the Government resigned. Lord Northbrook's prophecy has been more than fulfilled.

The effect of Lord Northbrook's presence soon showed itself. Within three weeks of his arrival in Cairo the Egyptian Government stopped the payment of the sum set apart by the Law of Liquidation towards paying off the public debt. Legal actions were at once commenced by the representatives of the Great Powers, and verdicts in their favour were given in the Courts. But though he had concurred in these acts of bankruptcy Lord Northbrook did not advise pushing this policy too far. His report was in favour of once more addressing the other Powers in order to obtain a modification of the Law of Liquidation ; and his investigation of the income and expenditure of Egypt bore out in a remarkable way the results arrived at by the English experts—the cardinal point of difference in the late Conference.

“I should propose,” wrote Mr. Childers to Mr. Gladstone, “that this [result] should be sent to the Powers, with a despatch showing that Lord Northbrook virtually confirmed within a trifle the figures we laid before the Conference, and that we could only renew, with some minor modifications, the proposals we then made. . . . I think if we are quite firm this may succeed. . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Then Vicar of Embleton, Northumberland ; afterwards Bishop of London. Died January, 1901.

Accordingly it was determined again to try and obtain the support of the Powers, more especially of France, and in December, 1884, England once more put forward proposals for the settlement of Egypt's financial difficulties, which included a loan of five millions to be guaranteed by England, the Alexandrian indemnities (four and a half millions) to be paid in preference bonds at five per cent.

To these France put forward counter-proposals, backed by Bismarck, who at this time appears to have exerted himself principally to oppose England.

*From Earl Granville.*

January 9, 1885.

I am told that Ferry believes we shall accept his counter-proposal—of which the chief points are joint European guarantee, taxation of coupons, free Suez Canal, and agreement with us about Daira and Domain.

*To Earl Granville.*

January 10, 1885.

If what you have heard turns out to be correct, we ought to come to terms with France.

*From the Earl of Northbrook.*

January 21, 1885.

Will you tell me if I am right in having understood you to say yesterday that with a loan of nine millions and an English Finance Minister in the Egyptian Government, the finances of Egypt would, in your opinion, be so managed as to enable the full interest of the debt to be paid, thus avoiding the need of an international investigation?

*To the Earl of Northbrook.*

January 21, 1885.

Yes! I said what you mention, and it has been my opinion for a long time. If you will refer to the paper I wrote before the decision to propose a Conference (I

have not a copy here, but it was dated, I think, late in March, 1884), you will see that I urged the appointment of a Finance Minister.

Ten days later Mr. Childers again submitted to Mr. Gladstone the opinion he all along held, namely, that the primary condition for the successful rehabilitation of Egyptian credit was the installation of an English Minister of Finance in Cairo.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*January 30, 1885.*

Although the long delay of the French Government in answering our last proposals about Egypt is very provoking, I understand that we shall have their answer in a day or two, and if it is favourable we shall be ready to formulate the necessary amendments to the Law of Liquidation. They are being now drafted by the committee which discussed details before the Conference—Welby, Wilson, and Carmichael, assisted by Pauncefote<sup>1</sup> and Blum.

But I do not like to postpone writing to you on what to my mind is essentially necessary for our success in the two years' scrutiny of Egyptian finance which the agreement with the Powers will, I hope, give us, before we recur to them (if necessary) for permanent charges on the bond-holders. I mean the appointment of an English Minister of Finance at Cairo, with powers similar to those of the Treasury here.

I said from the first, in conversation with you and in written papers, that no mere financial adviser, nor even a financial under-secretary at Cairo, would have the necessary power and authority to put matters straight.

The failure of the Conference was largely due to an inaccurate appreciation of the financial position ; and unless we have a keen Treasury eye and firm financial hand at Cairo during the two years of grace which we hope to get from the Powers, the complications will be increased instead of diminished.

I think you incline with me to the belief that any real

<sup>1</sup> Sir Julian (now Lord) Pauncefote, afterwards British Ambassador at Washington.

establishment of financial order in Egypt will entail a considerable re-adjustment of taxation, and it is absolutely hopeless to dream of any such measures being carried out unless we exercise a strong as well as a conciliatory financial authority.

If, having removed protective and trade-depressing duties and established a fair and defensible scale of taxation, we can still say that a sacrifice from the bondholders is necessary, we shall go to Europe with a far better case. But the Pacha Government of Egypt will never initiate such a system themselves.

What we have to do is to go to Europe in 1887 showing that on the one hand we have removed protective and trade-depressing duties, and, on the other, have established a fair and defensible scale of taxation, affecting alike rich and poor, natives and foreigners. This the Pacha Government will never do unless they *must*.

To this Mr. Gladstone entered a strong demurrer. He shrank from creating the discord with France which, in his estimation, the proposal would entail, though possibly, he added, Mr. Childers only intended the appointment to be temporary and limited.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

February 3, 1885.

The last sentence of your note<sup>1</sup> of yesterday about Egyptian finance expresses exactly my meaning.

I did not intend that there should be an English Minister of Finance except during the term of our occupation.

The Powers, if they give us time for putting Egyptian finance in order, can hardly object to the means we may think fit to employ.

Another Conference was now assembled, and this time with very different results. After two months spent in negotiations, patience and perseverance triumphed, even against the ill-will and opposition of Bismarck.

<sup>1</sup> (*I.e.* presuming that the appointment should be temporary and limited.)

*From M. Waddington.*

*February 27, 1885.*

I have again telegraphed to Paris this morning to press for the final and formal assent of the German Government. As soon as I receive it you shall be informed forthwith. You know that the G.O.M. at Berlin is not to be hurried or made to speak sooner than he wishes to. I am longing for a solution quite as much as you are, and am doing all I can to obtain it. I must repeat, however, that I am not aware of any fresh difficulties, and I believe Prince Bismarck is merely taking his leisure to say "Yes." It is a bore, but I do not see how we can help it.

At last, on the 18th of March, 1885, Mr. Childers was able to announce in the House of Commons that the Convention had been signed and an agreement arrived at. The six Great Powers agreed to—

- (i.) A loan of nine millions at three and a half per cent. guaranteed by all the Powers (Russia limiting her liability to a million and a half).
- (ii.) The coupons of the Unified and Dominium debts to be taxed at the rate of five per cent. for two years.
- (iii.) The interest on the Suez Canal shares held by England to be reduced by a half per cent.
- (iv.) Foreign residents to be subject to Egyptian taxation.

It was stipulated that this guarantee should carry no right of international control ; and that during two years England was to receive £200,000 towards the expenses of the army of occupation. The neutralization of the Suez Canal was also included.

On the 26th of March Mr. Gladstone moved the resolution authorizing her Majesty to guarantee the payment of the interest of the loan (£315,000), and (after a debate which continued for two nights) it was carried

by 294 to 246. But even after the Convention had been ratified much difficulty was experienced in coming to an agreement as to the exact way of placing the loan on the market, the German Government wishing to have the nine millions divided into six equal portions, to be raised at different times in the capitals of the Great Powers; and it was not till after the change of Government that the floating of the loan was actually carried out. On the 29th of July the loan of nine millions was offered for public subscription in London, Paris, Berlin, and Frankfort, at 95½, and in the course of a few days applications for two hundred millions had been received. The success of the new loan, combined with the enforced economy of administration, relieved the Egyptian Government of its pressing liabilities; and from that year the returns of revenue and expenditure began to indicate that prosperity was returning.

The ratification of the London Convention was the turning-point in the fortunes of modern Egypt. From the day on which the House of Commons authorized the Government of Great Britain to guarantee the interest on the loan, fortune began once more to smile upon that land.

In the words of Sir Alfred Milner—

“That Convention is the organic law of Egyptian finance to the present day. The system established by it, though not without faults, was a great improvement on the Law of Liquidation, and for the first time rendered the financial salvation of the country possible.

“Indeed, the wonder is how, in view of the indifference of most of the Powers to the welfare of Egypt, and the bitter annoyance of France at our presence in that country, the English Government ever succeeded in inducing all the parties concerned to agree to so reasonable an arrangement. It would probably never have done so, had it not been for the interest felt by the Powers, and especially by France, in the payment of the Alexandria indemnities.



SAMPSON GIDEON  
ESQ<sup>R</sup>

SAMPSON GIDEON.

*From a Picture in the possession of Mrs. Culling Hanbury, at Bedwell Park, Herts.*

[To face p. 216, Vol. II.



Great Britain was in a perfectly inexpugnable position in refusing to settle those claims unless all other outstanding liabilities of the Egyptian Government were provided for at the same time. It is to the lever given to the British Government by the question of the indemnities, and to the concession made to Germany and Russia in allowing each of them to appoint a Commissioner to the *Caisse de la dette* (which henceforth consisted of six instead of four members), that the Egyptian Government owes the London Convention.

"There are two great points to be noticed about that important agreement. In the first place, it empowered Egypt to raise nine millions sterling by means of a loan guaranteed by all the Powers, and to make the annuity of £315,000 set aside for the service of this loan, a first charge upon the revenues assigned to the debt. With the security afforded by the guarantee of the Powers, the new money was obtained on excellent terms. The nominal amount borrowed in order to obtain nine millions of ready money was only £9,424,000, and as the interest did not exceed three per cent. the annuity of £315,000 not only sufficed to cover that interest, but left a substantial sum over for the reduction of the capital.

"To obtain nine millions in cash for an annual payment of £315,000 was something quite unheard of in the history of Egyptian finance. No fairy godmother ever produced a richer or more unexpected gift. The sum in question not only paid the Alexandria indemnities, and wiped out the deficits of the years 1882-1885, but provided a round million for new works of irrigation."

*From Earl Granville.*

*March 18, 1885.*

I must thank you warmly for the ability and wonderful patience you have shown in dealing with the Egyptian finance.

That we shall be violently abused is certain. That we shall be turned out upon it is unfortunately improbable.

But my sense of relief is immense. I could not think of any practicable alternative to an agreement with the Powers, and I never heard anybody suggest one.

I feel like when, after a long and horrible nightmare, one wakes and finds it was only a bad dream.

*To Earl Granville.*

*March 18, 1885.*

You are very good to say what you do about my work in this business. I lost (mentally) all patience long ago, but I have tried not to show it.

There was no alternative to an agreement with the Powers from the first.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE BUDGET OF 1885.

1885.

Dissensions in the Ministry—The Budget—Fall of the Government.

THE words in Lord Granville's note last quoted ("that we shall be turned out upon it is unfortunately improbable") pointed to a want of harmony and a state of tension, which had been increasing steadily for some months, in the Government; the fact is, that the question of the renewal of the expiring Crimes Act scarcely divided Ministers more than the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for meeting the deficit in the coming Budget.

Owing to the Sudan expedition and the Russian war scare (after the incident of Penjdeh),<sup>1</sup> a sum of fifteen millions had to be found beyond the estimate of the previous year: and eleven of these fifteen millions were for war expenditure. The question arose, "How should this sum of fifteen millions be raised?" And it was on this question that opinions were divided, and that eventually the Government fell.

It would be idle to deny, in view of the fact that the Irish Crimes Act now fell to be either renewed or abandoned, that the members of the Radical wing of the Cabinet were anxious to extricate themselves from a

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 192.

very embarrassing position. They now had their opportunity, for the Budget in any aspect was bound to offer a bitter pill to some portions of the community ; yet that Budget, had the Cabinet been firm and united, might at any rate have worn a bold and consistent appearance.

From the very beginning of the new financial year, dissensions seem to have arisen : the Chancellor's proposals for finding the fifteen millions had been that one half should be found by suspending the reduction of the National Debt for two years, and that the other half should be found partly in a direct manner, by raising the income tax from fivepence to sevenpence and by equalizing the death duties, and partly in an indirect manner, by increasing the taxes on spirits and beer. And in support of his proposals he wrote :—

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

1885.

I have given directions for the preparation of a detailed comparison between the amounts contributed, at different times, to the revenue by direct and indirect taxation, but the following very rough figures may meanwhile interest you.

I compare in respect of certain branches of the revenue, the years 1868-69 and 1884-85.

In each year the income tax stood at sixpence, one penny of that sixpence being added in November for special war purposes. In this respect, therefore, the upper and middle classes are now as they were.

They have gained by the greater part of the following remissions :—

				£
1. Fire Insurance Duty	...	...	...	1,000,000
2. House Duty	...	...	...	500,000
3. Carriage and sundry small duties	...	...	...	250,000

But they have lost by—

1. Additional Death Duties	...	...	...	600,000
2. Gun and Dog Duties	...	...	...	150,000

Their net gain has thus been about £1,000,000 a year. But, on the other hand, the consumer has gained by—

				£
1. Repeal of the Sugar Duties	...	...	5,500,000	
2. Repeal of the Corn Duty	...	...	800,000	
3. Reduction of the Coffee Duties	...	...	200,000	
4. Half the abolition of the 1 <i>d.</i> a mile Railway Duty	...	...	200,000	

On the other hand, the consumer has lost by—

1. Substitution of Beer for Malt Duty	...	...	100,000	
2. Additional Tobacco Duty	...	...	500,000	

His net gain is, therefore, £6,100,000 per annum, against the gain by the owner of property, £1,000,000.

The comparison may be stated in another way.

In 1868-69 the receipts from the whole of the Customs and from the Excise on articles of consumption were £38,600,000; in 1884-85 they were £42,600,000; increase in fifteen years, £4,000,000, or 10½ per cent. In 1868-69 the receipts from income tax at sixpence, from death duties and from fire insurance were £14,000,000. In 1884-85 (the fire insurance duty having been repealed), the receipts from income tax at sixpence and death duties were £19,600,000; increase in fifteen years, £5,600,000, or 40 per cent. The increase in population was 17 per cent.

To the proposals of Mr. Childers, it has been asserted without contradiction, that at least two prominent members of the Cabinet offered a decided opposition: they objected—so it was stated—to further indirect taxation, and they considered that the increased burdens caused by the war preparations should fall solely on income tax or property. To effect a compromise, postponement was resorted to, and an arrangement was arrived at; and on the 30th of April the Financial Statement was made in the House.

To find the £15,000,000, the Sinking Fund was to be suspended, so as to give one half of that sum; and as

to the remaining seven and a half millions, it was proposed—

To raise the Income Tax from 5 <i>d.</i> to 8 <i>d.</i> giving ...	£	5,400,000
To equalize the Death Duties on real and personal property ... ... ... ...	200,000	
To increase the Spirit Duty ... ... ... ...	900,000	
"    "    Beer Tax ... ... ... ...	750,000	
To impose a tax on corporation property ...	150,000	
A stamp duty of 10 per cent. on bonds and foreign securities payable to bearer ... ...	100,000	
		7,500,000

The principle that all classes should bear their share of the increased burdens was admitted by the House of Commons to be just; the question of the increase of the beer and spirit duties was reserved, and the House adjourned for Easter.

But a day had scarcely elapsed since the Budget speech had been made when better news came from the East;<sup>1</sup> at the same time, a great outcry in England was raised against the proposed increase in the beer tax, while in Ireland a similar clamour was directed against any increase in the duty on spirits. It is clear that this skilfully raised agitation in the country did not tend to restore harmony in the Ministry; and in all the circumstances Mr. Gladstone said that there must be a further postponement till after Whitsuntide, three weeks later. Against this bad remedy Mr. Childers protested most strongly, stating that his position would become untenable if the agitation was to be allowed to continue for three weeks without the opportunity being afforded for reply or explanation on the part of the Government. It would certainly have been advantageous for his comfort and personal happiness had he resigned forthwith; but the friends whom he consulted dissuaded him. Sir George Trevelyan wrote:—

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 195.

*From Mr. (now Sir G.) Trevelyan.*

40, ENNISMORE GARDENS, S.W., May 17, 1885.

I am much obliged to you for your statement of the situation. I have a very strong admiration for Gladstone's constant and hitherto successful efforts to keep the Government together, and should be very glad that you should make your mind up *after* the Whitsuntide holidays, instead of now. I state my view baldly; but I hold it very strongly.

P.S.—I was very much pleased at being elected trustee.<sup>1</sup> I was almost more pleased to find, in tracing back the succession, that I was in direct descent from Macaulay—Lord Taunton having succeeded him, and the Duke of Devonshire Lord Taunton.

Lord Halifax advised him to hold on. “I cannot,” he wrote, “advise you to quit Gladstone’s Government on finance. I recommend you to arrange *with him* what should be done, and stand to that.”

Unfortunately their advice prevailed, and with Mr. Childers’s characteristic consideration for others he yielded, and informed Mr. Gladstone on the 18th of May that he had made up his mind not to resign, because he did not consider the matter to be one of absolutely vital importance.

A Budget constructed amid such untoward surroundings was hardly likely to be acceptable to an incensed opposition or to doubtful supporters and lukewarm colleagues. The temptation to escape from the dilemma of the question of the Crimes Act renewal was too great for some of the last mentioned, who were plainly riding for a fall. On the other hand, some members, well qualified by their business experience to judge, gave the Chancellor’s proposals a loyal support.

<sup>1</sup> Trustee of the British Museum.

*From Sir Joseph Pease, M.P.*

24, KENSINGTON PALACE GARDENS, May 17, 1885.

There is a rumour afloat, that you think of giving way on the beer and spirits duties (if we have peace) and the money is not *all* wanted. I write to say that I fear this would do us much harm in the *North*; nothing could be worse for us than the idea that the Government were worshipping at the shrine of Bacchus!

If you can take one penny off the income tax eight-pence, then the other duties might also be dealt with similarly, but not unless. I fear it would do us much harm if the idea got abroad that you were afraid of the publicans, who have of late been the great foes of the Liberal party, and who, most people believe, dine on the vitals of England!

*To Sir Joseph Pease.*

May 18, 1885.

I have no idea of yielding to the liquor interest. I based the Budget on reasons which are as conclusive (to my mind) now as then. I presume that the suggestion you make means that, if we reduce by a third the additional income tax, we might apply the same rule to the additional drink duties. I had not heard of the idea, which is worth consideration; but at the present moment I doubt whether a case has been made for diminishing at all the extra taxation.

It is difficult to gauge the publicans' agitation. It seems to carry weight in the metropolis.

*From Mr. (now Sir) John Hibbert, M.P.*

STATION HOTEL, YORK, June 2, 1885.

I am very glad to see by the papers that you are much better, and sincerely trust that it is really the case, so that you may feel equal to the hard work awaiting you in the Budget Bill.

Before I left town I had a talk with Goschen, who seemed strongly in favour of your tax on spirits and beer, and hoped they would not be withdrawn. Hubbard<sup>1</sup> also

<sup>1</sup> Right Hon. J. G. Hubbard, M.P. for the City, afterwards Lord Addington.

desired me to tell you that he should give a hearty support to every part of the Budget.

We came here yesterday from North Lancashire, in order to see York and Durham, neither of which we had seen previously. We shall return to town to-morrow afternoon, and I hope to be at the Treasury on Thursday morning.

*To Sir John Hibbert.*

HOUSE OF COMMONS, June 3, 1885.

I am here for the first time to-day, and I find your note. I am, thank you, much better, not yet strong, but free from the immediate results of so sharp an attack. I shall not recover my full strength for some time, and I suffer a good deal from headache. We shall settle the Budget finally on Friday. I think that the proposals ought to satisfy moderate people; but if R. Churchill has satisfied the Tories that property and "fair trade" ought to bear everything, I can only say that I wish the squires and merchants joy of the new policy.

I had a very satisfactory talk with Goschen, and Hubbard sent me by Birch<sup>1</sup> a very encouraging message.

At last, on the 5th of June, the resolutions were brought before the House of Commons, and on the second reading of the Budget Bill, three days later (June 8th), Sir Michael Hicks Beach proposed the amendment which was to prove fatal to the Government, condemning the increase of the beer and spirit duties in the absence of any corresponding increase of the wine duties, and objecting to the increased duty on real property. Mr. Gladstone announced that the matter was one of life or death to the Government, adding that the secret of the attack lay really with the proposals to reform the death duties. The House then divided, and the Government was defeated by 264 to 252.

*From Mr. Thomson Hankey.<sup>2</sup>*

June 10, 1885.

I am sorry that the Government has been broken up

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. W. Birch, Director of the Bank of England.

<sup>2</sup> Formerly M.P. for Peterborough.

on a question of *yours* ; but if it is any satisfaction to you, I feel sure you are quite right. It is a curious fact, I think, that whereas so many measures of your Cabinet have been according to my notion wrong, yet that the one on which I am confident you *were quite right* should have upset the coach : such is often the fate of political life. I think I have heard that Pitt's Government was once upset on a question of a duty on spirits.<sup>1</sup> I sympathize with you, I can assure you, very sincerely ; but on the other hand I am not at all sure that your health will not be greatly benefited by the absence of the worry of Government life for a spell at least. You will be wanted again, and meantime it will do you all the good in the world to be for a time more free from care and hard work. I cannot resist sending you one word to say how glad I feel in thinking that your last act in the late affair was promoted in good sound sense, and I am sure you will never regret or look back otherwise than with satisfaction to your Budget of this year.

*To Mr. Thomson Hankey.*

June 11, 1885.

Your note is a great consolation to me.

When the whole story of the Budget, and how it came to pass that it was only finally decided upon in the House of Commons on the 8th of June, instead of about the 20th of April, comes to be known, no one will blame me.

It is certainly remarkably odd that a Government which survived its South African, and Egyptian, to say nothing of its Irish, policy should have apparently fallen on a question of spirits. But the Tory opposition was really roused by the death duties.

I shall be very glad of some rest. The normal work of a Chancellor of Exchequer has been trebled by Egypt, and I never recovered from the lassitude with which I began it in January, 1883.

I shall preserve your note as the kind words of a real friend.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Rosebery wrote the following in the album of Mrs. Stephen Simeon, Mr. Childers's daughter :—

“ EPITAPH ON A CABINET. June, 1885.

“ Here lies a Cabinet ; I'll tell thee why,  
It spelt its funeral bier without an 'i.' ”

*From Viscount Halifax.*

*June 9, 1885.*

I wish you joy of being out of a mess, and I don't envy the succeeding Chancellor of the Exchequer. Poor Northcote, he will have a bad time of it. They must raise a tax and put a duty on wine, and I don't think that this will be a popular move. It is an interesting time, and no pleasant one for officials.

*To Viscount Halifax.*

*June 10, 1885.*

Our notes have crossed ; thank you for yours.

There is no news to-day, but it is the general impression that the Tories will try their hand, and of course no one will wish to turn them out before the General Election.

On the 12th of June Mr. Gladstone announced the resignation of the Government. Three days later Lord Salisbury began to form his first Administration, and summoned at his house a conference of the Conservative leaders. The same evening the revolt of the Fourth Party was complete. Lord Randolph, who had kept away from the Conference, triumphed all along the line ; and Sir Michael Hicks Beach was installed as Leader of the House, "*vice* Sir Stafford Northcote, promoted."

*From Viscount Halifax.*

*June 16, 1885.*

What on earth are you after in the House of Commons ? Is Lord Randolph, or Northcote, or Beach, the leader of the Conservative party ? Do enlighten me as to what it all means, for it is quite unintelligible in the *Mercury*.<sup>1</sup>

You may have to propose the Budget after all.

*To Viscount Halifax.*

*June 17, 1885.*

Here is the story : On Friday we arranged with Lord Salisbury and Northcote that the Lords' Amendments,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Leeds Mercury.*

<sup>2</sup> To the Redistribution of Seats Bill.

which were to reach the House of Commons that afternoon, should be taken at once. Accordingly, when they came, Mr. Gladstone made the motion. While he was making it, R. Churchill sent up a piece of paper to Northcote, "Put it off till Monday;" and to our and everybody's surprise Northcote obeyed.

Between then and Monday, R. Churchill, and others, planned to send Northcote to the Lords. So when the Amendments came in, and we said that they had been settled with Lord Salisbury (who requested us to move to agree to them), and when this had been confirmed by Northcote, R. Churchill, Wolff, Gorst,<sup>1</sup> and, to our great surprise, Hicks Beach objected; R. Churchill objecting to the dictation of one man, and Gorst raising constitutional questions about the Lords. Northcote began to yield, and put up John Manners and Cross to ask what we intended to do. We sat silent, and urged on a division, when we won by 333 to 35, the minority containing all the Fourth Party, H. Beach, Sclater Booth,<sup>2</sup> and Raikes,<sup>3</sup> the others, except Chaplin, of no moment. R. Churchill went about the House in the lobbies, stating that he had upset the Tory Government.

But at eleven yesterday morning he made his submission to Lord Salisbury, as did Hicks Beach. Before evening the settlement was completed; but Northcote goes to the Lords,<sup>4</sup> and there will be some exclusions.

This was his last letter to the old Whig statesman, who more than fifty years before had held office in the Reform Ministry of Earl Grey. Lord Halifax died on the 8th of August of this year (1885).

On the resignation of his Second Ministry, Mr. Gladstone again renewed his inquiry as to whether Mr. Childers would be disposed to take the Grand Cross of the Bath.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Right Hon. Sir John Gorst, M.P. for Cambridge University; Vice-President of the Council.

<sup>2</sup> M.P. for North Hants, 1857-1885; afterwards Lord Basing.

<sup>3</sup> M.P. for Cambridge University; afterwards Postmaster-General.

<sup>4</sup> He became Earl of Iddesleigh.

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

June 11, 1885.

It is very good indeed of you to renew to me the offer twice made to me in 1882. I feel that I merit it now less than ever.

But I am afraid that my former objections remain in full force. As long as I am in the House of Commons I have no wish to have any other prefix to my name than that of a Privy Councillor.

I again thank you for all your kindness to me.

Lord Salisbury having formed his first Administration,<sup>1</sup> the business of the session was wound up as soon as possible; and all interest now centred on the coming General Election.

<sup>1</sup> Foreign Secretary, Marquis of Salisbury; First Lord of the Treasury, Earl of Iddesleigh; Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury; Home Secretary, Sir Richard Cross; Colonial Secretary, Col. Stanley (now Earl of Derby); Secretary for War, Mr. W. H. Smith; Secretary for India, Lord Randolph Churchill; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir M. E. Hicks-Beach; Irish Secretary, Sir William Hart-Dyke; First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord George Hamilton.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## HOME RULE.

1885-86.

General Election of 1885—Defeated at Pontefract—Returned for Edinburgh (South)—Home Secretary—The West-End Riots and the Police—The Prerogative of Mercy—Home Rule Bill of 1886—Final Retirement from Office.

EVER since 1880 the belief had been gaining ground in Mr. Childers's mind that nothing but a generous measure of self-government would meet the needs, not only of Ireland, but also of the Imperial Parliament itself.

The considerations which led him to advocate Home Rule are recorded in his own words in the following memorandum (found among his papers), showing that it had become his opinion that some form of Home Rule would eventually be unavoidable, if only from the contested state of Parliament itself.

Towards the close of the Parliament of 1874 I began to be impressed with the hopelessness of getting through the work of the United Kingdom with one legislative body sitting at Westminster.

I was present during the greater part of the long debates of that Parliament when Ireland blocked the way; and I was in the chair for half that all-night sitting in committee on the South African Bill,<sup>1</sup> which clearly showed how an over-worked House of Parliament could be still more crippled in its powers of work.

All this set me thinking whether time for adequately

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 248.

discussing at Westminster the often neglected affairs of the Empire might not be better obtained by relegating to inferior legislative bodies the purely local affairs of each of the three kingdoms, than by artificial restraints on the liberty of debate, always distasteful to Englishmen, which had begun to be suggested in many quarters.

The congestion of Parliamentary work was not, it is true, unwelcome to those who, through fear of change, were glad to minimize the legislative work of the House of Commons, but it was dreaded by the Liberal majority, who felt that legislative and administrative reform were falling into arrear, and that every year was making matters worse.

These impressions gained more and more power over me, and were strengthened by what I saw during annual visits to the United States and Canada: I had special facilities for watching the action of Congress and the State Legislatures in the former, and of the Dominion Parliament and the provincial Legislatures in the latter. Again and again I asked myself how it is that our race in the great Republic and in the greatest of our Colonies requires and fully occupies all this Parliamentary machinery (between forty and fifty legislative bodies, most of them with two chambers each), while we imagine that we can adequately transact the business of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Imperial affairs of the whole Empire, with one Parliament only. I reflected how imperfectly and hurriedly, and often badly, that business was transacted; and, referring especially to Ireland, the question constantly recurred to me whether the experiment of 1801, however needful it may have been at the time, was necessarily wise as a permanent measure; and whether, in fact, the, to my mind, cogent, and indeed overwhelming argument of Mr. Pitt against the Parliamentary system resulting from Mr. Grattan's great change twenty years before could not have been met, or, rather, could not now be met, in another way.

I had, meanwhile, spent some time at Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, and I had had special opportunities for studying the relations of the Central Parliament at Berlin with the Governments and Legislatures of the Kingdoms and States which made up the German Empire.

My mind became very full of the subject in the year preceding the General Election, and the particular direction my thought took was to satisfy myself about the proposals

of those moderate Home Rulers to whom anything like revolution was distasteful.

I accordingly addressed myself to three of them ; and in London and at Dublin I devoted myself for some time to reading the political literature now very little known, of that famous Parliament which Mr. Pitt succeeded in overturning. I came out of these studies with three especial conclusions: first, that Grattan's Parliament, a purely Protestant body, could not be taken as a model for the Legislature of a country in the main Roman Catholic ; secondly, that Mr. Pitt's case for the Union for the purpose of such a military administration as would secure the best national defence was unanswerable ; but, thirdly, that no case whatever had been made for depriving Ireland of such legislative powers in a United Empire as were at that time enjoyed by each of the American States which together formed the United States, controlled by a Parliament at Washington.

Before, however, making up my mind finally, I determined to visit Ireland again, studying for myself the opinion of unprejudiced Irishmen. I accordingly, in the summer of 1880, visited Eastern and Western Ulster, going thence to Galway and Limerick, and later to Kerry and County Cork. Political events brought me back to England some weeks sooner than I had intended, but much of the part of Ireland which I had seen confirmed me in the impressions I had already formed.

I returned to England convinced that, in a plan of federal Home Rule lay the salvation of Ireland. Whether Scotland would demand the same (Welsh Home Rule had not then, I think, been heard of) I had no power to estimate. But that Ireland should be placed in the same relation to the United Kingdom as Massachusetts to the United States, or Nova Scotia to the Dominion of Canada, or Bavaria to the German Empire, seemed to me reasonable, feasible, and highly expedient ; while, for Imperial purposes, the Union should be stoutly maintained. I made no doubt that this division of powers would strengthen, not weaken, the union and the authority of the united Parliament.

But I also made up my mind that, for the time, federal Home Rule was out of the question. I was in office, and could only watch events, some of them most unfavourable to anything like reasonable courses.

But before the Dissolution of 1885 the sky was

beginning to clear. It was notorious that at the Castle, in that and the previous year, the words "Home Rule" were no longer tabooed. It was said that Mr. Chamberlain and Sir C. Dilke were going to Ireland to study the Home Rule problem, and other public men, on both sides of politics, were using language in anticipation of the Dissolution very different from what they had used in 1874 and 1880; and it appeared to me that the opportunity had come for formulating some portions of the federal Home Rule plan which had been in my mind after my visit to Ireland five years before.

Accordingly, in September, 1885, Mr. Childers communicated his views to Mr. Gladstone, formulating his ideas, and stating that he proposed to announce them as part of his hustings policy at the coming election.

To this Mr. Gladstone replied on the 28th of September, 1885, in an evidently carefully considered letter, in the course of which he counselled his correspondent, if bent upon making any declaration at all, to confine himself to an expression of willingness to consider the Irish claim to have a Legislature of their own for non-Imperial questions; and more than hinted that it would be unwise for Mr. Childers to pin himself down either as to the form of any local Legislature or as to any detailed differences between Imperial and non-Imperial questions. He also advised his keeping a free hand as to the revenue. The Ulster difficulty was not overlooked by Mr. Gladstone, particularly with regard to the possible necessity of protecting the landlords of that locality; and the letter contained a forcible warning as to the difficulties and even dangers of negotiations with the Irish leaders, whose disposition to raise their terms whenever approached in a friendly spirit had not escaped his notice. Mr. Childers therefore cut out a good deal from the details of the large measure of local self-government which he had drawn up, and, addressing his constituents at Pontefract, on the 12th of October following, he formulated a general

scheme, in which, though he drew a line very clearly as to what were Imperial and what non-Imperial matters, he avoided (in accordance with Mr. Gladstone's advice) committing himself as to the constitution of the bodies to which local affairs in Ireland might be trusted ; he had no hesitation, however, as to the definition of certain Imperial subjects. As long as all that concerned the Crown and the Civil List, foreign relations, the defensive forces of the country, maritime jurisdiction, the Customs and Post-office, the Court of Final Appeal, the currency and coinage, and the regulation of the Public Debt, were reserved to the Imperial authority, he would leave the ordinary administration of justice and the public establishments to be regulated locally.

This was the first speech made by a responsible leader in which a definite suggestion was made as to the measure of Home Rule which could be safely granted ; and although it left undefined the form of the bodies to which local affairs in Ireland might be entrusted, it was not unfavourably criticized.

But six weeks later, on the 21st of November, Mr. Parnell's manifesto was issued, calling on all Irishmen in Great Britain to vote everywhere against Liberal candidates ; and Mr. Childers soon discovered that his speech—whatever might have been its effect on the minds of the Irish in his constituency—would have but little influence on their votes at the poll. The result of his canvass was disquieting. “I have against me,” he wrote, “the people for whom I have done, or would do, most—the soldiers and the Irish. Between them they have over two hundred votes.”

Mr. Gladstone wrote to encourage him, urging him to expose the Tory dodge of fair-trade, and expressing the opinion that the Irish question would act on all other controversies like the sun on a fire in the grate.

But the combination against him proved too strong, and on the 23rd, after a close contest, he lost the seat he had held for twenty-five years. This rejection by Pontefract, after so many years of faithful service, he felt to be particularly undeserved. To be beaten by a young and politically unknown candidate<sup>1</sup> was bad enough; but what made his defeat peculiarly bitter was (as he remarked in the letter already quoted) that it had been brought about by a combination of those whose cause he was at the time advocating (the Irish) with those for whose welfare he had worked hard for two years at the War Office—the newly enfranchised non-commissioned officers and men, of whom there were sufficient in the dépôt at Pontefract to have a determining effect on the election.

On the 15th of December Mr. Gladstone wrote, deeply regretting the result, hoping the Whips might find him another seat, particularly because the Irish question overshadowed all others, and of all his colleagues in the House of Commons Mr. Childers had the best and most forward mind. Mr. Gladstone pressed him to give him his advice. He wished Lord Salisbury would take up the question, but scarcely expected it.

To this Mr. Childers replied :—

*To Mr. Gladstone.*

*December 16, 1885.*

I told Grosvenor<sup>2</sup> immediately after my defeat at Pontefract that I should be glad to find another seat, and he made one or two endeavours on my behalf, but without success. I doubt whether it will be very easy, as I am thoroughly against disestablishment; and the truce with the Liberationists was only for the General Election. Already I have heard of this as a probable difficulty, wherever Dissenters are strong.

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Rowland Winn, now Lord St. Oswald.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Richard Grosvenor (now Lord Stalbridge), at that time chief Liberal Whip.

After twenty-six years of Parliamentary life, I should be very unwilling to admit that the House of Commons was closed to me. I am, and always shall be, deeply grateful to you, for what you say now, and for all you have done for, and said to me, in the past. There is no question to solve which I would more gladly work at—and under you—than that of Irish government. But it may be impossible for me to find a seat before you are in the thick of the fray.

You ask me my present view (I presume not so much as to what the solution should be—about that I wrote to you in the autumn, and my opinions are unchanged, although more developed in detail) as to what the course of action to be taken by the party should be. I presume, although this may not be quite certain, that Lord Salisbury will indicate in the Queen's Speech proposals for county government in Ireland, but not for anything like Home Rule, and that Mr. Parnell will bring the matter to an issue by moving a Home Rule amendment couched in very moderate language. My present opinion is that the Liberal party ought not in such a matter to be led by Mr. Parnell, and that they should decline to vote with him, and, if necessary, abstain from voting at all. But I think that you would do well to be ready with a plan approved by the mass of the Liberal party, and that it should be introduced as soon after the Address as possible. If Mr. Parnell accepts it, so much the better; but he would be following your lead, not you his. You would be sure of 320 Liberal votes if Hartington concurs; and I gather from his speeches that he is not opposed to Home Rule on principle, but requires that it should operate gradually, and with the safeguards which you mentioned in your former letter to me. I don't feel quite so sure about Goschen, but I doubt his keeping aloof if Hartington can be got to agree. If Hartington determinedly keep aloof, I doubt the wisdom of early action, and I presume that you would be very reluctant on such a question as this to act with the centre and left wing of the party, without the right wing. Failure would be very disastrous, and might undo all the good done in England (especially in the counties) at the General Election.

In that case, considering that there are only 250 Tories in the House, a waiting game cannot be wrong. Excuse my plain speaking.

He was not left long without a seat ; the death of Sir George Harrison created a vacancy in South Edinburgh, and he was invited to stand.

*To his Daughter, Milly.*

117 PICCADILLY, December 28, 1885.

... I go to Edinburgh to-morrow. I shall know in two or three days how the land really lies. If I can get the left wing to vote for me, all will be well. If they put up their own candidate, and the Tories do the same, it will be all wrong. There are one or two things against me—my decided views about Ireland, and about the Church, my late Budget, etc. On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone's name goes a long way at Edinburgh, and I am looked upon as his *âme damnée*. . . .

He met with a very cordial welcome at Edinburgh, and, uniting all sections of the party, was returned by a large majority. The bitterness of the Pontefract defeat was now softened, and he hastened to Westminster, though not in time to take part in the critical division on Mr. Jesse Collings's Amendment to the Address.<sup>1</sup>

With the change of Government which followed this division it was originally proposed that Mr. Childers should return to the War Office, in the administration of which department he had been more fortunate than at the Exchequer ; and he had agreed to this proposal. But at the last moment other arrangements had to be made, and eventually it was to the Home Office that he went.<sup>2</sup> The bad luck which had attended him in Downing Street

<sup>1</sup> This was the "three acres and a cow" resolution. Mr. Chamberlain voted for it, Lord Hartington against. It was carried by 329 to 250.

<sup>2</sup> First Lord of the Treasury, Mr. Gladstone ; Lord Chancellor, Lord Herschell ; Home Secretary, Mr. Childers ; Foreign Secretary, Earl of Rosebery ; Colonial Secretary, Earl Granville ; Secretary for War, Mr. Campbell-Bannerman ; Secretary for India, Earl of Kimberley ; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt ; First Lord of the Admiralty, Marquis of Ripon ; Irish Secretary, Mr. J. Morley.

seemed bent on following him to Whitehall, for, on the very day<sup>1</sup> (almost the very hour) on which he took over his new office, riots occurred in the West-End. A meeting of the unemployed had been held in Trafalgar Square, which divided itself into two groups—the “Fair Trade League” and the “Revolutionary Social Democrats.” Speeches were made ; those to the latter body, by Messrs. Hyndman, Burns,<sup>2</sup> and Champion,<sup>3</sup> being couched in violent language. The better portion of the meeting then dispersed, but others marched by Pall Mall, St. James’s Street and Piccadilly to Hyde Park, breaking the windows of club-houses and private residences, and wrecking and robbing numerous shops, causing damage and loss to the value of £50,000. Mr. Childers had gone down from his house in Piccadilly about noon, to hold a sort of levée of the heads of Departments, who were formally introduced to him. He had a long interview with Mr. (now Sir) Godfrey Lushington, and Sir Edmund Henderson<sup>4</sup> was present also, when assurances were given him that his predecessor<sup>5</sup> had made all the necessary police arrangements. “About 3.30,” writes Mr. Stephen Simeon, one of his private secretaries, “I was at work in my room, when my bell was suddenly rung. I went to the Chief, and found him very much agitated by a message which he had just received from Mrs. Childers to this effect : ‘I know how deeply you will grieve to hear of the death of Uncle Childers.<sup>6</sup> *Our windows have escaped, but those of our neighbours have suffered.*’ He had to put aside for the moment his personal regret, and asked me at once

<sup>1</sup> February 8, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Now M.P. for Battersea.

<sup>3</sup> Now well-known as a journalist in Melbourne.

<sup>4</sup> Chief Commissioner of Police. <sup>5</sup> Sir Richard Cross.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Walbanke Childers passed away at the age of eighty-eight. From him his nephew had from his earliest years received the benefits of his experience and judgment. He had succeeded his own father at Cantley as long ago as 1812 ; in every respect he had been the model of what an English country gentleman ought to be.

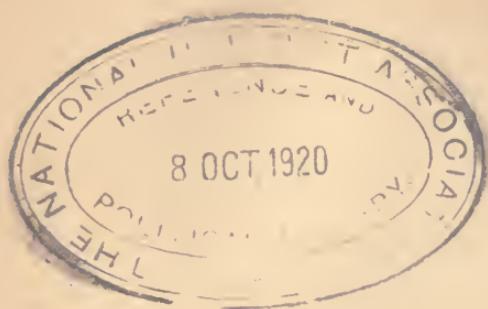


*J. W. Childers*

JOHN WALBANKE CHILDERS OF CANTLEY.

*From a Drawing by George Richmond, R.A.*

[To face p. 238, Vol. II.



to explain the meaning of the last paragraph, which I was unable to do, having had no communication from the police, and having no idea that any riot had occurred. I at once telegraphed to Scotland Yard. No one in the Home Office had the remotest idea of what had occurred."

The riots were really a casual affair, that is to say, they were not planned beforehand. The serious fault was not the strategy of the day, although it is true that a most extraordinary mistake occurred.<sup>1</sup> But the real fault lay elsewhere, and is to be found in the fact that the police stations were not connected, as they ought to have been, by electric telegraph or telephone. Had Mr. Childers's advice early in 1880 (referred to already) been thoroughly acted on, these electric communications would long before 1886 have been properly installed ; and that would have made the extension of the riot impossible. The mischief done, the remedy, of course, was put in hand, and Mr. Childers took an active part in seeing that proper provision was made for the future.

*To his Son, Francis, in India.*

February 12, 1886.

I was glad to get your letter from Gibraltar. You had just heard of my election at Edinburgh. You will have heard much more since then : my appointment to the Home Office, and re-election, the construction of the new Government, and uncle Childers's death on Monday last. He is buried to-day at Cantley ; but, for reasons I will now describe, I have not been able to go. . . . The serious matter which prevented my leaving town was the riot on Monday, after a meeting in Trafalgar Square, got up half

<sup>1</sup> A large body of police were ordered early in the proceedings to go along "Pall Mall," and head the mob before they could turn up St. James's Street. The order was misunderstood, and the men marched along "The Mall," formed up in front of Buckingham Palace, and remained there standing at ease all the afternoon, while the mob were smashing windows in Mayfair.

by the Fair Traders, and half by the Socialists. The police lost their heads and the mob marched down Pall Mall, up St. James's Street, and down Piccadilly to the Park, breaking a great many windows on the way. In the Park they held a meeting, with fiery speeches, and then went to South Audley Street, doing much more mischief, and even plundering shops. I took over this department between eleven and twelve, and the heads of the police told me that all necessary preparations had been made, and, of course, I could not have made any change even had I wished. But all the trouble of inquiry falls on me, and the Police are greatly discredited, part of this discredit being reflected on the Home Office. We decided to-day to indict the principal offenders, and on Monday I am in the chair of the inquiry about the police.

The inquiry here referred to was a committee appointed by Mr. Childers to report upon the circumstances leading up to the riot, involving, as that did, an inquiry into the action of the police, and the arrangements made by the authorities for the meeting. Some remarks were made at the time as to the propriety of the Secretary of State himself presiding at an inquiry into the conduct of a department under the Home Office.

*From Sir Henry Holland (now Viscount Knutsford).*

*February 13, 1886.*

It has been represented to me, since I saw you this afternoon, that the fact of your being chairman would prevent the Committee from inquiring into the action of the Home Office on the 8th. This was certainly not my view, and from what has already passed, I do not believe it to be the view taken by the Committee of the duty before them. I apprehend that they would not hesitate fully to inquire into the action of the Home Office, so far as it was connected with the conduct of the police authorities. But to prevent any future misunderstanding upon this point, I should be glad to have your authority for stating that the Committee are quite free to make such inquiry.

*To Sir Henry Holland.*

*February 13, 1886.*

Beyond question the Committee can and *should* inquire into the action of the Home Office on the 8th. I never had any other intention.

The Committee sat for four days; the general tenor of their report was adverse to the Chief Commissioner of Police, and he resigned. To Mr. Childers's sensitive nature it was exceedingly painful to have as his first duty at the Home Office to accept the resignation, under the circumstances, of Sir Edmund Henderson, who was an old friend, and for whom he had the greatest respect. The word "re-organization" had been used in connection with the police changes, and it enabled Mr. Childers to recommend to the Treasury that the long and able services of Sir E. Henderson deserved the most liberal terms of retirement, which were accordingly granted.

The question of the selection of a new Chief Commissioner was not an easy one, and several of those to whom the appointment was offered were unwilling to accept it.

*To his Son, Francis.*

*March 18, 1886.*

I hope that by this time you are comfortably settled in Madras. I offered the Chief Commissionership first to Sir Redvers Buller, and Lord Charles Beresford, but they in turn declined it. I have not had any other important Home Office business. I think that we have seen the worst of the Socialist meetings, but until the frost goes there will be a good deal of distress among the working people. At the moment, the question is whether Chamberlain and Trevelyan will, or will not, resign. If they go, I do not see how the Liberal party can hold together. I shall be loyal to what I said in October, and in the end there must be some form of Home Rule.

At last a successor to Sir E. Henderson was found in his brother officer, Sir Charles Warren.

*To his Daughter, Milly.*

March 17, 1886.

Thanks for your note. You will have heard that the new policeman is General Sir C. Warren, now on his way from Suakin. The appointment has been very well received, and those of the newspapers which have abused me for the last fortnight for not appointing A, B, etc., or for having been refused by D, E, and F, have now to confess that he is the best man, and that they never guessed his name, but that I was a fool for *thinking* of appointing G, H, and I!

The questions of the direct responsibility of the Secretary of State for police arrangements, and of the relations between the Home Office and the police are very clearly dealt with in the following letter:—

*From Mr. Godfrey Lushington.*

February 21, 1886.

I don't know whether there is going to be any further inquiry as to the "relations between the Home Office and the police," but it seems to me that you should take an early opportunity—if possible at question-time to-morrow—of disabusing the public mind of the error, circulated by the Press, and by some who should know better, that the Secretary of State is personally responsible for the Police Orders, detailing Police arrangements for the maintenance of order at public meetings. The error, of course, arises from the fact that the police are subject to the Secretary of State; the Statute 10 George IV. c. 44, which founded the Force,<sup>1</sup> contemplates in the preamble "an Office of police acting under the immediate authority of one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State."

If indeed the theory of the Secretary of State being responsible for these matters were correct, it would recoil first upon the head of Sir R. Cross. For, knowing as he did how insufficient was the time his successor would have for arranging the details for last Monday's meeting, it would

<sup>1</sup> The Act was passed on the motion of Sir Robert Peel, then Secretary of State.

have been his duty to see that complete preparations were made, and if the preparations turned out inadequate, and the Secretary of State is responsible for such inadequacy, then that responsibility would rest much more with him than with you.

But the truth is, there never has been any such theory or practice. On this point there is no difference of opinion between the Home Office and police. The Commissioner fully admits the responsibility is with him, not with the Secretary of State; and he is the last person who would wish otherwise. He issues the orders on his sole authority: at the moment of issue he sends copies to the Home Office, plainly for record only, not for revision, of which time would not admit. It is true that on the occasion of an important meeting, the Commissioner takes care to have a previous conference with the Secretary of State, and to submit to him a general outline of the intended arrangements: and this is very well as an assurance to the Secretary of State that the Commissioner is alive to the situation and has the matter well in hand; also as giving to the Secretary of State an opportunity of impressing upon him the importance of making ample provision, and also, if need be, the advisability of having the military in reserve. But if this previous conference is to be taken as an admission that it is the Secretary of State who gives the orders, and is responsible for them, and that the Commissioner may exculpate himself by pleading that the arrangements are not his, but the Secretary of State's, then the result would be contrary to common-sense and most dangerous to the public safety. For consider this case—

What has to be done is to make quasi-military arrangements for the preservation of order. The Commissioner is usually a soldier; at all events accustomed to handle bodies of men. He has experience of dealing with crowds; he knows well the *locus in quo* of the meeting or procession, where the crowd will be. He knows well the police force, officers and men, the stations, and reserves, and communications; also, it should be said, the needs of the rest of the metropolis, which must not be left unprovided for. The Secretary of State knows none of these things. To make the Secretary of State responsible is, therefore, to ease of responsibility the officer who is competent, and to cast it on one who is incompetent, with the result to the public that may be imagined. It may be that on some occasions (very rare) a Secretary of State, with

special aptitude for military tactics, has taken upon himself to interfere in and alter details of police arrangements. But I look upon this as a precedent that ought not to be followed, as putting the Secretary of State in a false position, and tending at once to divide and confuse the source of responsibility, which belongs solely to the Commissioner. The Secretary of State ought to stand quite clear. It was for this reason that I yesterday expressed the hope that the Police Orders would not again be revised at the Home Office.

Similar considerations apply to messages during the progress of a meeting. It is very well, if opportunity permit, to send a message to the Secretary of State in order to allay anxiety, or to acquaint him at once with any disaster; but if messages are to be taken as anything more, they are an absurdity.

Suppose, for instance, the Commissioner was to report that riots had broken out in Hyde Park. What is the Secretary of State to do? Is he to summon the Commissioner from the scene of action to confer with him? Is he, being at the Home Office, to give orders to the Commissioner, who is on the spot? Or is he to go to the spot to take over the command? These things have only to be stated to be seen to be absurd.

It may be said that it is for the Secretary of State to apply to the War Office for troops. No doubt this is the normal course where time admits. But in the case supposed time does not admit. The officer commanding the police would apply direct to the officer commanding at the barracks, and the troops would be out long before the Secretary of State could take action.

It is essential that the Commissioner should feel that he has a free hand, that he must rely solely upon himself, and be exclusively responsible for the result. Any division of responsibility is, in my opinion, incompatible with the public safety.

Compensation for damage done by the rioters on this occasion was provided for by a special Act of Parliament, but the general law was also altered by the Riot (Damages) Act, 1886. Hitherto, under a succession of old statutes, the inhabitants of the hundred in which the property was situated were liable to pay compensation. The Act of

Mr. Childers provided that compensation should be paid out of the police rate of the district ; and under the power given by the Act he, as Secretary of State, promulgated on the 28th of July a code of regulations, which is still in force.

Mr. Childers was only six months at the Home Office ; but he was, while there, on more than one occasion called upon to advise the Crown in the exercise of its prerogative of mercy. The following letter constitutes a useful pronouncement on a subject with which the general public are perhaps not very well acquainted.

*To Sir Graham Berry (Agent-General for Victoria).*

*November 11, 1886.*

Mr. Cashel Hoey<sup>1</sup> has sent me a copy of a telegram you have just received from the Colony as to the practice of summoning the English or Scotch judges to attend meetings of the Privy Council, and has asked me to tell you what is done when a judge is consulted in respect to the commutation of a criminal sentence.

As Mr. Hoey surmises, the Privy Council has nothing to do with the commutations. The prerogative of mercy inherent in the Crown is dispensed—in Great Britain by the Home Secretary, in Ireland by the Lord Lieutenant. I can speak as to the practice in Great Britain. Every capital sentence is reported at once by the sheriff, and also by the gaoler, to the Home Office. Usually the newspaper reports of the trial accompany the report. The Home Secretary then decides whether to ask the Judge for a written report in the first instance, or to request him to come to the Home Office. In every case he becomes possessed of the Judge's opinion, and he often refers to him, for his report, any petitions or memorials on behalf of the prisoner. I never heard the question raised as to the right of the Home Secretary to require the attendance of the Judge, and I am sure that no English

<sup>1</sup> John Cashel Hoey, C.M.G., and a Knight of Malta, Secretary to the Agent-General, 1872-1892. In early life, he had been a member of the Young Ireland Party, and editor of the *Nation*. Mrs. Cashel Hoey, his widow, is the well-known writer.

or Scotch Judge would hesitate to attend at the Home Secretary's request.

When a memorial for the reduction of a lesser sentence, pronounced either by a judge of assize or by an inferior tribunal, is received by the Home Secretary, he considers whether the attendance of the Judge is desirable; and, if necessary, he sends for him. In such a case the report of the Judge is almost invariably required. While I was Secretary of State, I more than once sent for the Judge in a matter where the punishment was penal servitude or imprisonment, and I should have been greatly surprised had he hesitated to come to the Home Office.

The Secretary of State is not a Court of Appeal whose proceedings are regulated by statute. He is responsible for the administration of one of the highest prerogatives of the Crown—that of mercy. It is undoubtedly the duty of every Judge to render to him, in that capacity, whatever assistance he may require, in such form as he may direct.

With reference to Mr. Cashel Hoey's second question nothing specially occurs to me, but I have no personal acquaintance with the practice of the Juicial Committee of the Privy Council.

Sir Graham Berry was at this time Agent-General for Victoria. The practice in that colony in capital cases is for the Judge to attend the meeting of the Executive Council with his report on the case, at which meeting the Governor of the colony presides. It was at the time when this letter was written the duty of the Governor, in accordance with his instructions on appointment, to act on his own discretion in the matter should he differ from his advisers—recording, however, his reasons; but this practice was altered in 1892.

While Mr. Childers was Home Secretary the question of extending the hours during which marriages might be solemnized came up.

Till 1886 marriages (except with the licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury) had, under the 62nd Canon of 1603, to take place between 8 and 12 in the forenoon;

and by sect. 21 of the Marriage Act, 1823, any one (without such licence) solemnizing a marriage at other times was guilty of felony. In 1886 Mr. Carvell Williams, the Liberal member for South Nottingham, introduced a Bill to extend the limit to 4 p.m. Mr. Childers said :—

“ Since this Bill has been printed, I have been in communication with those most interested, both with the Church of England on the one side, and the registrars on the other; and I find that, in their opinion, it is desirable to extend the hours. But the suggestion I shall make to the hon. gentleman who has charge of the Bill, is that, instead of four o'clock, three o'clock should be taken as the limit. In the winter time, almost everywhere in England—certainly in the North—it is quite dark at four o'clock; and I consider it would be much better to so limit the rule as to the time when marriages should take place, as not to allow them to be solemnized after dark. That is the rule which governs the Archbishop in the matter of the issue of special licences. I understand he has laid it down, as a general rule, that licences for special marriages shall not be granted for a later hour than three o'clock.<sup>1</sup> If, therefore, the Hon. Member will alter the figure 4 to the figure 3, I shall be happy to agree with the Bill, believing with him that the old reason, which guided our forefathers in not allowing marriages after twelve o'clock,<sup>2</sup> no longer exists, and that it would be quite reasonable to permit them to take place up to three o'clock.”

In this shape the Bill passed.

Mr. Childers joined Mr. Gladstone's third administration with a clear record as to Home Rule; he had propounded a moderate scheme, and his views were well known to the country. During February and March Mr.

<sup>1</sup> It had been proposed to extend the time till 6 p.m. for marriages by special licence; but the Primate, who had sought the Home Secretary's advice on the matter, seemed doubtful about so late an hour. “ Why not split the difference and make it three?” Mr. Childers suggested, and the Archbishop adopted the suggestion.

<sup>2</sup> The old dinner hour.

Gladstone was engaged in drafting his measure ; though Mr. Childers felt some surprise that at this stage so little consultation had taken place among his colleagues as a whole, he thought that his own public utterances as to what branches of legislation must be deemed essentially Imperial, rendered it unnecessary that his advice should be formally sought. Hence it was with almost a sense of dismay that, on the Bill being printed, he found it to go far beyond his own scheme ; in particular it gave the Irish legislature a financial and fiscal jurisdiction, and even the regulation of their currency. To find the plan stereotyped in this form, without having been himself consulted, gave him the deepest disquietude.

But he remembered that Mr. Gladstone had written to him as to the one of all others on whose assistance he greatly relied ; and he felt that his long association with the Prime Minister (dating from the Treasury days of 1865) would enable him, as much as any other House of Commons member of the Cabinet, to exercise some influence towards the elimination of what he considered the perilous parts of the scheme.

To Mr. Gladstone, therefore, he stated, in the plainest terms, his objections to the proposal that the customs, the excise, and the regulation of the currency should be under the control of the Irish Legislature. Not confining himself to these points, he indicated to the Premier that the first starting-point should be, not the relation of a Colony to the Mother Country, but of a State to the United States. He reminded him of the Home Rule plan which he had sketched at Pontefract, in advance of any other Front-bench Liberal, and that more recently at Edinburgh, after the revelations, which had been made to the public through the medium of Mr. Herbert Gladstone,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On December 16, 1885, there appeared simultaneously in the *London Standard* and the *Leeds Mercury* what purported to be an

he had been obliged to speak plainly and answer a great number of questions. Now, however, Mr. Gladstone, who, the previous year, had shrunk from Mr. Childers's moderate proposals, was giving his sanction to a measure which went far beyond them in its scope.

On his first stating these objections he found Mr. Gladstone unyielding. He therefore intimated (through one of the Prime Minister's secretaries) that, unless the objectionable clauses were removed, he must resign either his seat in the Cabinet or his seat at Edinburgh.

The effect of this was that Mr. Morley<sup>1</sup> was hurriedly consulted, and the obnoxious features of the Bill were struck out ; and Mr. Childers therefore no longer felt any hesitation in supporting the measure.

The Bill was brought in on the 8th of April, and, on the 21st of May, Mr. Childers supported the second reading in a speech in which he referred to his own experience of the benefits of self-government.

I ask is there any danger in conceding the powers proposed by the Bill ; or, rather, is there not greater danger in refusing them ? The House will perhaps allow me to refer to my own experience. I have seen what, to a certain extent, influences me in arriving at my own conclusion. I was in Australia thirty years ago. There was,

authentic description of Mr. Gladstone's proposals. They included the creation of an Irish Parliament, with securities for the representation of minorities ; one of the guarantees suggested being the nomination of a proportion of the Irish members by the Crown. Though the last clause was rejected as conjecture, the rest of the plan was accepted as possibly showing the drift of the ex-Premier's mind, inasmuch as its publication coincided with the arrival of Mr. Herbert Gladstone at Leeds from Hawarden, and an interview with his local supporters. Mr. Gladstone disavowed the statement as "an accurate representation" of his views, but the majority of the public accepted it as a *ballon d'essai* to ascertain the direction of public opinion.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Morley was now Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. He had not been in any former Ministry, and had only been elected at Newcastle in 1883.

at that time, a constant struggle between the Australian colonies and the English Government, which refused them control over a large part of their own financial affairs, and also refused to give them responsible government. I saw some years of that controversy, and also the victory that was gained by the colonies. . . . From the time when those powers were given to the colonies the feelings of distrust and of hostility to the mother country which had sprung up in former years, and had led to considerable mischief, passed away. And at the present time the three millions of people in the Australian colonies are probably as loyal and contented subjects of the Queen as are to be found in her dominions. This, sir, is due to the concession of responsible government and entire control over their own affairs, which was so stoutly resisted forty years ago. Similar results have been seen on a larger scale in Canada. In moving the second reading of the present Bill, my right hon. friend<sup>1</sup> briefly and clearly showed what had been the results of the controversy with Canada. There was, fifty years ago, a limited representation of the people in the legislative bodies in Canada, but the executive was nominated from this country. All that the local legislatures could do was to refuse or qualify the appropriations proposed by the Government; their functions were practically limited to this control, and even that, more than once, was taken away. Then came the two rebellions—in which were engaged Colonists both of British descent and of French extraction. It gave this country great trouble to put down these rebellions, and Canadian affairs occupied much of the attention of Parliament. Many said that it would be wiser to adopt a policy of concession, and to give the Canadians the management of their own affairs, under the authority of the Crown. But the majority of this House were not of that opinion, and proposals of the kind at first received only limited support. In 1838 the late Lord Derby made a speech, some of the expressions in which will appear very familiar to members of the present House. In the debate on Lord Durham's<sup>2</sup> plan of self-government for Canada, he said of the Canadians:—

“They were a people of ignorance the most profound, of prejudice the most inveterate, of simplicity the most

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gladstone.

<sup>2</sup> John George, first Lord Durham, who had been Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Lord Privy Seal.

undoubtedly, of vanity the most egregious—a people in the most absolute and entire dependence upon those demagogues and leaders who flattered their prejudices for the purpose of obtaining their support. If it were desirable to retain the Colony, this project, which would at once render nugatory on our part all control over them, and plunge us into difficulties which could only be escaped from by violence, must not be entertained for a moment. What would be the consequence? The establishment of a Republic. The concession would remove the only check to the power of the dominant majority—a majority in numbers only; for in wealth, in education, in enterprise, it was greatly inferior to the minority, who were settlers of British descent."

What was the course taken on the advice of that far-seeing statesman, Lord Durham? He went out to Canada, and he advised her Majesty's Government how to settle the question. There is one sentence of Lord Durham's which sums up the whole matter. He proposed that "The Colonies themselves should be allowed to execute as well as make the laws." Now, for this, Lord Durham was called a great many hard names—almost as many as have been applied to my right hon. friend. His policy was called a "seditious and shameful" policy; and those words are only a sample of the attacks which were made upon him. But his policy was carried out; wiser counsels than those represented in the speech from which I have just quoted were adopted, and the same persons who at that time denounced Lord Durham and his proposals, within twenty years discovered that the Canadian Constitution was thoroughly fit for a people of British origin. No one, even of those sitting opposite, fails now to appeal to the Constitution of Canada as ensuring good and sound administration. So I venture to believe will be the case with regard to Ireland.

If I have troubled the House too long with these references to other countries it is because human nature—British human nature and Irish human nature—is the same, whether on this side of the ocean or on the other. I cannot but feel confident that as all those fears, which were prevalent, at that time and for some years, on the part of a majority of the House of Commons, were dissipated by experience when Lord Durham's proposals were thoroughly carried out, so these fears with regard to Ireland will be dissipated by experience.

I have spoken upon this question without introducing any matters of personal controversy, and I have tried to keep strictly to facts and analogies, hoping that for once such a line of argument may be acceptable to the House, even without the use of personalities. And I will conclude with the words used by Mr. Burke on this subject, in his famous letter to Lord Charlemont:<sup>1</sup> "Mutual affection will do more for mutual help and mutual advantage between the two kingdoms than any ties or artificial connection whatever. No reluctant tie can be a strong one." At the present time the tie which exists between the two countries is not only a reluctant tie, but one which I believe is deeply disliked—I might almost say hated—by a large portion of the Irish people. In my humble judgment, the new bond of amity and equal interest which this Bill proposes will be accepted by Ireland with cordiality, and will, I believe, result in a permanent attachment to, and affection for, this country.

But the fate of the Bill was sealed as soon as it was known that Mr. Chamberlain and his followers had joined hands with Lord Hartington and the Whigs. He wrote to his daughter Milly:—

*April 11, 1886.*

I think we are certain to be beaten on the Irish Bill, and I am nearly certain to lose my seat for Edinburgh;<sup>2</sup> so our approaching retirement into obscure life has to be contemplated.

On the 7th of June the second reading was negative by 341 to 311. Parliament was at once dissolved. The verdict of the country at the elections which followed confirmed the action of the seceders from the Liberals, and the party, left in a large minority, had no course open

<sup>1</sup> James, first Earl of Charlemont, who helped Grattan to draft the resolution regarding the rights of Ireland, which he moved with great effect on the 19th of April, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> This prediction was falsified. The poll took place on the 6th of July, when the result was—Childers, 3778; Purvis (afterwards M.P. for Peterborough), 2191.

but to face the task of attempting, in opposition, to educate the country on the question on which they had been so severely defeated while in power.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The principal members of the new Ministry were : First Lord of the Treasury, Marquis of Salisbury ; Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury ; Home Secretary, Henry Matthews, Q.C. ; Foreign Secretary, Earl of Iddesleigh ; Colonial Secretary, Edward Stanhope ; Secretary for War, W. H. Smith ; Secretary for India, Viscount Cross ; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Randolph Churchill ; First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord George Hamilton ; Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## COLONIAL AFFAIRS.

1881-1885.

Federation—French and German Designs in the Pacific—Differential Duties.

DURING the whole of his public life Mr. Childers never ceased to do what he could to advance the interests of the Australian colonies; his views were not always in accord with those of his colleagues. In 1881, the old feeling referred to in his letter of the 4th of September, 1872,<sup>1</sup> was still in existence, though the awakening of the mother country had already commenced. This awakening had been stimulated by the Inter-Colonial Conference of 1880, and was subsequently further developed by the offer of the contingent for service at Suakim. From that time onward the sense of unity continued to increase, till it culminated in the participation of the colonies in the Jubilee of 1897 and in the Transvaal War of 1899-1901.

Mr. Childers struck the keynote of Colonial Federation when he told Sir Henry Parkes that its impulse must come from Australia. This was the secret of the slow but forward movement which has been crowned by the Commonwealth Act of 1900. That Act was an Australian-drawn measure, which is "similar in outline" to that affecting Canada, but differs greatly in detail, especially

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Vol. I. p. 211.

as regards the relative position of the Federal and State Parliaments.<sup>1</sup>

*To Sir Henry Parkes, K.C.M.G.<sup>2</sup>*

WAR OFFICE, May 4, 1881.

I am much obliged to you for sending me the Minutes of your recent Inter-Colonial Conference, and I have read them with much interest. Ever since I was a member of the first Cabinet in Victoria (1855-57), I have been strongly in favour of a federation of the Australian colonies, similar in outline, but I hope not in detail, to the Canadian Federation. I hope that this will be materially promoted by your Conference. I have always felt that the impulse must come from Australia, not from this country. If it were supposed that public men here had some special object in promoting federation in Australia, its prospects would be damaged; and it is for this reason that those who would be disposed to further the movement have been generally silent on this side. My special responsibilities lie now in a department into which colonial questions do not often enter; but, at the right time, I hope to be able to do what I can for a cause which I observe that you advocate so powerfully. But I hope that you will not move until public opinion in the colonies has been unmistakably and almost unanimously expressed in your favour. Our recent total failure in South Africa is a decided warning.

The Australian colonies, however, had not yet made up their minds; for, three years later (in 1884), Mr. James Service wrote:—

Our federation movement here has a good deal of cold water thrown on it by our Sydney neighbours; and

<sup>1</sup> See on this subject, "The Coming Commonwealth," by Mr. R. R. Garran. Sydney, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Henry Parkes, the "Grand Old Man of Australia," was five times Premier of New South Wales. This was his third Administration. He was beyond question the architect of federation, though he passed away four years before its completion. In 1891 he presided at the Convention held in Sydney to frame the Federal Constitution. He died at a great age in 1896.

the Stuart<sup>1</sup> Government, which in the end entered warmly into the project, has lately become much weakened over its Land Bill and Budget. Nevertheless, I have great hopes of their Parliament passing the Convention resolutions, and if that be so, there is not much doubt of the other colonies; at all events, we shall surely get the number mentioned in our draft Federal Council Bill, *four*, and I hope that, as time advances, Lord Derby will warm up to the occasion, and associate his name and your Government with an event which will loom large in the pages of history—the federal union of the Australian colonies! I think a country which within the next half century will contain a population equal to that of Britain now is worth “grappling to your soul with hoops of steel,” and we here have been a good deal surprised and disappointed at the cold discouragement we have received from the Colonial Office.

In his reply, Mr. Childers expressed his regret that Sydney should be weak about federation.

“The debate in the House is not hopeful,” he wrote. “Of course, Australia is not Canada; but, the general principle, if good with them, must be so with you. How soon will the railway system be completed between Brisbane at one end and Adelaide at the other?”

That the time was not ripe yet for federation, and that the colonies themselves had not made up their minds, is apparent from the lack of information available at home as to their wishes.

*To Mr. J. Cashel Hoey.*

WOODCOTE,<sup>2</sup> January 13, 1885.

I would be much obliged to you if you would let me know (with reference to Mr. Service’s letter to Mr. Murray

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Alexander Stuart, who had become Premier at the end of 1882.

<sup>2</sup> In Shropshire, where he was visiting Mr. C. C. Cotes, M.P.

Smith<sup>1</sup> in yesterday's *Times*) what the Government of Victoria are supposed to desire as to a closer connection with the mother country.

You will remember that I have for many years thought over the question, and that I have always been disappointed by the indefinite character of the suggestions made at the Colonial Institute and elsewhere. There is plenty of abuse of the Home Government, and especially of Mr. Gladstone's administration; but what is the proposed plan?

(1) Is there to be any legislative union for Imperial purposes, *i.e.* Army and Navy, Diplomacy, I presume Debt, Court of Appeal, Post Office, etc., or any of them? If there is to be a union for what costs money, the legislature must be able to tax. Is this for a moment contemplated?

(2) Is there to be a series of treaties between the Home Government and the several colonies, or groups of colonies, for purposes of defence? If so, who is to enforce their terms if violated?

(3) Or is it simply that the Colonial Agents, singly or in combination, are to be either formally or informally consulted more than now?

I should like to have some idea of what is talked about at Melbourne and Sydney. What colonists at home talk about is of very little importance.

One cause which helped to give vitality to the federation movement in the colonies should not be overlooked. Reference is frequently to be found in Mr. Childers's letters, about the years 1884-85, to the French and German designs in the Pacific; this activity of the European Powers, coupled with what was considered as the supineness of Lord Derby, the Colonial Secretary, roused strong feelings in Australia, and had a tendency to bind the colonies together for greater security against a common danger. As a consequence, for a third time in

<sup>1</sup> R. Murray Smith, C.M.G., then Agent-General, and thereafter member for Hawthorne in the Legislative Assembly. He has been for many years the leader of the Victorian Free-Trade party; his speech in 1899 in support of the vote for supplies to send the Victorian contingent to the Transvaal aroused great enthusiasm.

his career, Mr. Childers had to consider the question, vital to Australia, of keeping convicts and ex-convicts from her shores.<sup>1</sup>

To Mr. James Service he wrote:—

I have done, and am doing, all I can about the French convicts. I have had several conversations with M. Waddington, and the story of the Convicts Prevention Movement was sent to Paris. The statements in the newspapers about the opinion and action of the French Government are, for the most part, unfounded. But the enormous percentage of crime in France (compared with us or Germany), and their ideas of a police system, and their indifference to personal liberty, make them look at questions of this kind in a way quite different from ours. They certainly are in great difficulty. Cayenne is unfit for convicts on a large scale, and France is full of them, with steadily increasing numbers. I hope, however, that the colonies, while doing nothing rash, will be firm.

Subsequently he wrote to the Foreign Secretary:—

*To Earl Granville.*

February 11, 1885.

Would it be possible confidentially to warn the French Government of the entire delusion under which M. Waldeck Rousseau<sup>2</sup> labours as to the success of transportation to Australia?

As long as Australia had no civilized neighbours, had no communication by steam with the rest of the world, and had no large emigrant population, transportation was possible. It was the subject of strong reprobation even then by Whately<sup>3</sup> and others, but the supposed practical advantages of relieving England of some of her criminals prevailed. But when the neighbouring country had received a considerable number of free emigrants, and steam communication brought Australia within a few weeks of England, it utterly broke down. We were then compelled to substitute penal servitude; and the result has

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Vol. I. pp. 50, 103.

<sup>2</sup> The French Minister of the Interior.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin 1831-1863, social science pioneer and advocate in the philosophic spirit of penal reform.

been that crime and our criminals, instead of increasing, diminish from year to year.

Sir Edmund DuCane<sup>1</sup> would state the case far better than I can, and I would suggest whether a paper by him might not be sent to Lord Lyons for private communication to the French Government.

If the *Récidiviste* Bill passes, and any considerable number of convicts go to New Caledonia or the neighbouring islands, I feel certain that the inevitable action taken by our colonists will lead to the gravest consequences.

On the importance of the Governors of New South Wales and Victoria being men of the highest rank and position, he was thus addressed by the Chief Justice at Sydney.

*From Sir James Martin.*

CLARENS, SYDNEY, N. S. WALES, *January 3, 1885.*

According to the newspapers, Lord Augustus Loftus is to be relieved of this Government in August next, and it is rumoured that the successor is about to be appointed. Several names have been mentioned, and it is extremely probable that Lord Derby has not thought of recommending any one of them for the appointment. Should no steps have been taken to fill up the vacancy before this note reaches you, I should like most respectfully, and with all due deference, to make a suggestion. I have spent all my life here; I was elected a member of the old composite Council in 1848, and was for twenty-five years a member of our local parliament, and was seven years Attorney-General, five years of which I was President, and for the last eleven years I have been Chief Justice.

No one in this colony knows it and its prevalent public opinion better than I do; and I venture in all humility to suggest that the next Governor should be a man of as

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Sir Edmund DuCane; perhaps the greatest authority on the convict system. As long ago as 1851, he went to Western Australia to superintend public works done by convicts; he was for many years Chairman of the Prison Commission, and Inspector-General of Military Prisons; also Chairman of the Commission to carry out the transfer to Government of local prisons, which he had himself recommended in 1877.

high rank as you can procure. Without actual visual knowledge of the two leading colonies of Victoria and N. S. Wales, you can form no adequate conception of the strides which both places have made during the last two decades.

Sydney and Melbourne are two great capitals, and this colony (now the head in wealth, and soon to be the head in population) is so important that the appointment to its chief post of a mere Colonial Office official will be regarded with extreme disfavour.

This colony is no longer the field for the official *protégés* of the Colonial Office to look forward to as the goal of their ambition; our importance justifies us in expecting our Governor to be some man of mark. Of course the leading political men of England will not come, and the time has not arrived when we can look forward to such a man as Lord Dufferin accepting the post of Governor here; but without looking into the leading political ranks, there are many men of position who would be content to rule us for a time, and whom we would gladly receive.

I, of course, in consequence of my judicial position, am not of politics, but I am still a colonist with a large family, whose lot is cast here, and I am deeply interested in the welfare of the colony.

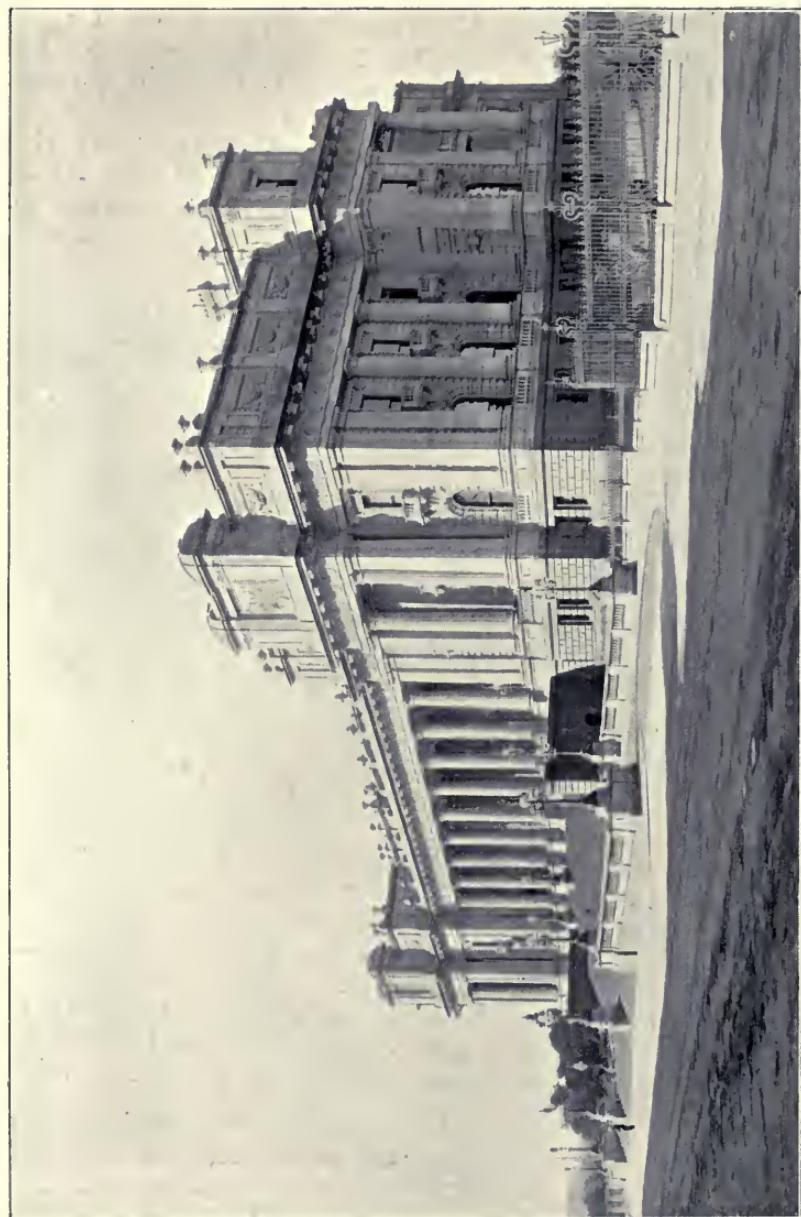
I am almost ashamed at my presumption in thus writing to you on such a matter, but my interest in the country, and, I may add, my thorough knowledge of it, may be regarded as my excuse.

*To Sir James Martin.*

*March 16, 1885.*

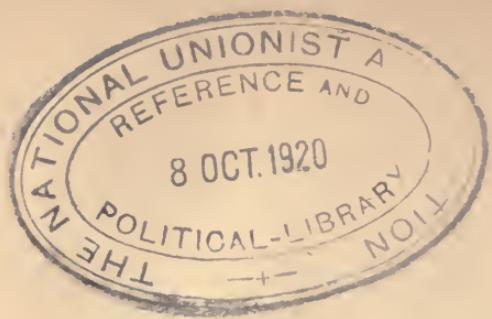
You will have heard long before you read this that the government of N. S. Wales has been conferred upon Lord Carrington. I think that he will be a good and popular Governor, not without political knowledge, and socially all you could wish. He and Lady Carrington will make Government House most pleasant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This prophecy was abundantly fulfilled. Lord Carrington remained in New South Wales till 1890. In 1892 he became Lord Chamberlain, an appointment very gratifying to Australia. A similar happy case which also gave great satisfaction was that of Lord Hopetoun.



PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA.

[To face p. 260, Vol. II.]



It is very long since I heard from you, and I hope that you have enjoyed the thirty years which have elapsed since we met at Sir Charles Nicholson's at Sydney. I have very few friends and acquaintances left in the colony. Your predecessor<sup>1</sup> is, I hear, still full of life.

We are all greatly interested in the contingent now on its way to Suakin.<sup>2</sup> They will, I hope, arrive in time for some active service before the hot weather sets in. It is, I think, greatly to the credit of N. S. Wales that this aid to the mother country should have been so generously offered.

I hope, when my official life comes, as it must soon, to an end, to visit the colonies, where I enjoyed the privilege of political apprenticeship, and I trust I shall find you at Sydney.

It was about this time that a question arose in the colony of Victoria as to the relative military status of the Governor, the Minister of Defence, and the Commandant of the Colonial forces, and Mr. Childers's opinion was sought as to whether the relative positions of the Queen, the Secretary of State, and the Commander-in-Chief were not a correct analogy. He was also asked whether in the case of a review of troops or an inspection of a camp the Secretary of State had any recognized military position ; and, if he were a soldier, what uniform he would wear on such an occasion.

*To Mr. Cashel Hoey.<sup>3</sup>*

117, PICCADILLY, July 17, 1885.

I have much pleasure in answering your questions. I was at the House until two o'clock last night, so that I only read your note this morning. This may, therefore, only reach you after you have closed your letters for the mail.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Alfred Stephen : he lived till 1894.

<sup>2</sup> The sending of this contingent was due to the spirited and patriotic action of Mr. Dalley, the acting-Premier under Sir Alexander Stuart.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary to the Agent-General for Victoria.

Speaking generally, I should say that the analogy of Governor, Minister of Defence, and Commandant, with Queen, Secretary of State, and Commander-in-Chief, was correct.

By law here the Secretary of State is supreme at the War Office, the Commander-in-Chief being only the head of the military branch under him. He is appointed by the Queen on the Secretary of State's recommendation, and receives all his instructions from the Secretary of State.

The only exception to the general principle is that promotions and appointments of a purely military character are only made by the Secretary of State on the advice of the Commander-in-Chief. But, as he can refuse to appoint the person or persons so recommended, the exception is really only nominal. If the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief differ, the latter must go to the wall in the end.

All generals in command at home or abroad receive their instructions from the Secretary of State. They correspond both with him and with the Commander-in-Chief, but with the latter only on points of discipline, he being for such purposes the channel of communication.

For discipline, as for everything else, the Commander-in-Chief by law is responsible to the Secretary of State, and the latter to Parliament.

The Secretary of State has no position as such at a review. That is supposed to be a purely military operation, as much so as service in the field. If the Queen, as supreme over everybody and everything, attends a review, she sometimes asks the Minister to attend her, in or out of civil uniform. He would be supposed to convey any instructions from her to the general commanding.

I do not think that the question has been raised as to the uniform of the Minister if he happened to be a soldier. I have a vague idea that General Peel, when Secretary of State, once went to a review in attendance on the Queen in civil uniform. Colonel Stanley might have gone in military uniform as her A.D.C. He has long held that appointment.

But the Secretary of State, if attending her as such, ought to wear plain clothes, or, if she desired it, civil uniform.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Childers himself had worn civil uniform at the great Volunteer Reviews in Windsor Park and in Queen's Park, Edinburgh, when attending the Queen as Secretary of State.

You are, of course, aware that all these questions form the fringe of the old, and rather bitter, controversy as to the position of the Secretary of State and Commander-in-Chief. But fifteen years ago that controversy was finally determined by an Order in Council and Royal Warrant.

Mr. Childers was always fond of discussing a fiscal or constitutional point. The following letter, which treats of the subject of the right of the colonies to levy differential duties, shows that he uniformly supported the Free-Trade principles in which he had been brought up.

*To Earl Granville.*

CANTLEY, December 26, 1884.

I have to-day received the correspondence between ourselves and the United States about a Commercial Treaty, referring to the trade between the States and our West Indies.

You will doubtless be considering, with the Colonial Office, whether we can agree to the colonies levying differential duties. The principle laid down in the instructions to all colonial governors is (if I remember rightly) that they may not assent to any such legislation, and it is of course a very serious matter to allow differential duties in the colonies in favour of foreign nations and against ourselves. So far as I can remember, the only violation of this principle to which we assented was contained in the old Reciprocity Treaty between Canada and the United States, which expired long ago, unless it be that we agreed to some special customs duties on tea entering Canada from the States, proposed some years ago.

But if we have been reluctant to assent to self-governing colonies imposing differential duties against the United Kingdom, is it not a great stretch of this exceptional permission to negotiate ourselves a treaty of this character in respect of colonies which are not self-governed? Will it not be difficult to resist "Fair-Trade" demands for differential duties in the United Kingdom if, apparently to gratify the sugar interest, we have sanctioned such duties in Crown colonies?

Passing from this, the question about the effect of the

treaties appears to me a very serious one. The contention of the United States, who, it must be remembered, have no colonies, may land us in the gravest difficulties. I presume that you will consult the law officers before accepting this part of the treaty.

On these two questions I have no more to say, but I feel bound to point out a third, and most grave objection to the treaty, viz. that it violates the principle of the navigation laws, and, in this respect, conflicts, not with Royal instructions or with the interpretation of treaties, which may be determined, but with an Imperial principle, consecrated by Statute. That goods brought into a colony should be subject to different rates of duty according to the flag, is a direct violation of the navigation laws, to which, in my opinion, we cannot possibly assent. It is one thing to charge different rates of duty on similar goods according to their origin ; but quite another to charge different rates on the same goods, according to the nationality of the ship which brings them.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## LAST YEARS IN PARLIAMENT.

1886—1890.

The Needs of the Church—Ecclesiastical Views—Tour in India—Peshawur and Quetta—The Khyber and the Khojak.

WITH the fall of Mr. Gladstone's third Administration, Mr. Childers's official career came to a close ; in fact, it may be said that his public life ended there. It is true that he was again returned by a large majority for Edinburgh—a larger majority than he had ever thought possible<sup>1</sup>—and he remained in Parliament for six years more ; indeed, nine years later he was still able to show his old aptitude for figures and mastery of detail when conducting the proceedings of the Irish Financial Relations Commission.

But after 1886 he was no longer the same man. The strain of the last six years of continued and laborious

<sup>1</sup> Mr. D. Buchan, Mr. Childers's agent, writes : “ There were two matters affecting Edinburgh, prior to Mr. Childers being member, about which he often wondered that no querulous elector had ever tried to question him. His first duty on going originally to the Treasury was to settle the incidence of the cost of firing the one o'clock time-gun at Edinburgh Castle, a portion of which, if I mistake not, he made the City pay. The other was his order when in attendance on the Queen as Secretary of State at the great Review in the Queen's Park, that every Volunteer returning by railway should be served with hot whisky at the first stopping station. It was rather curious that no temperance elector, of whom there were plenty, ever referred to the subject.”

official work—the War Office, with its Egyptian War and territorial reorganization ; the Exchequer, with its super-added burden of Egyptian Finance ; the Home Rule controversy, and the contests at Pontefract and Edinburgh—all combined to tell on his constitution. In addition to all this, news of the entirely unexpected death, in India, of his son Francis, a major in the Royal Artillery, reached him just before the Election of 1886, and gave him an additional shock. The Queen, on hearing the sad news, immediately wrote :—

*From the Queen.*

BALMORAL CASTLE, May 31, 1886.

The Queen has learnt, with deep concern, of the new sad loss which has befallen Mr. Childers, and would wish to offer him the expression of her sincere condolence.

She fears this must be the son who went through the Egyptian and Soudan campaigns, and of whom Mr. Childers was so proud.

That Mr. Childers may be supported in this hour of deep affliction is the Queen's sincere prayer.

Francis Childers had been a distinguished Harrow boy. He had passed very high into Woolwich, direct from the school—an unusual performance in the days when "modern sides" were just beginning to be thought of ; and it was therefore only natural that his old headmaster should remember him kindly.

*From the Master of Trinity (Dr. Butler).*

DAVOZ PLATZ, November 18, 1886.

Your truly kind greeting, which I greatly prized, followed me out to this wintry home, where I am staying for the health of a dear daughter. . . . What trials, dear Mr. Childers, have been laid upon you in your family circle ! Another gallant son taken, just when he seemed to be one of the "sons of England," and to have all the honours of his noble profession before him. What a happy, merry boy he was at Harrow ! He is one of those

whom I remember most freshly. Pray believe me that it would always give me peculiar pleasure to welcome you and Mrs. Childers at the Trinity Lodge.

From 1886 to 1889 Mr. Childers continued to attend in the House of Commons, but was obliged to give up late hours. He was still assiduous in his attention to the interests of his constituents, and this was reciprocated by the confidence and consideration which he always received from them, and of which he spoke to the last in terms of grateful appreciation. South Edinburgh had returned him to Parliament at the moment when he was feeling deeply his defeat at Pontefract, and South Edinburgh renewed its confidence in him by a large majority when he presented himself for re-election.

To a member in Opposition there is generally little opportunity for work of a kind to make a lasting impression, and the Parliament of 1886-92 was no exception to this rule. But to every faithful Member of Parliament there is a wearying round of duty to constituency and constituents to be performed. A Front Bench man, and particularly one who has been at the head of any of the great Departments of the State, is assumed to be at call for help in many matters with which his own constituency have little or no concern ; and he did his full share of political speaking in other Scottish constituencies. In many local matters his official experience was of much service, as, for example, in regard to securing from the Treasury an increased grant for the University of Edinburgh. In the summer of 1890 he interested himself greatly in furthering the legislation for Police superannuation in Scotland ; and in this connection he specially interviewed every Scottish M.P. for support to the Bill. Speaking at Edinburgh in October, 1890, on a subject always in his thoughts—the suggestions of recent Colonial history—Mr. Childers, in dealing with a time

which he was not destined to see, but which has already come, said :—

In the Australian Colonies complete Federation will be brought about in a comparatively short time, and when this is done there will be greater and increasing security for the unity of the Empire, and possibly some of those proposals—which some people call dreams, and others hopes, but which I call “moral certainties,” for the greater binding together of the Empire under a practical Federation system will be brought nearer and nearer to accomplishment, and we shall be able to look to the whole of our great Empire having one Army, but yet with the most absolute principles of Home Rule, which would leave to every part of it power to manage its own affairs.

Mr. Childers was never a wealthy man ; in the early sixties, before he first took office, he was probably more comfortably off than at any subsequent period of his life, as he at that time occupied a seat, or the chair, at the Boards of some of the foremost companies in the City; and it has been already seen that acceptance of office had permanently curtailed his income by a very considerable amount. On the death of Lord Beaconsfield, in the spring of 1881, the political pension of £2000 a year held by that statesman fell vacant, and Mr. Gladstone wrote to inquire whether Mr. Childers would like to apply for it. The qualification is four years' service in a political office of the first class.<sup>1</sup> The procedure is that the person to whom it is proposed to grant such a pension addresses an application to the Lords of the Treasury, and makes a declaration that the amount of his income from other sources is limited to such an extent as to bring him within the intent and meaning of the Act.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gladstone

<sup>1</sup> By sect. 2 of the Act of 1869, Class I. is described as “containing the office of First Lord of the Admiralty, and all other political offices remunerated with a yearly salary of not less than £5000.”

<sup>2</sup> Sect. 6 of the Act 4 & 5 William IV., c. 24.

drew Mr. Childers's attention to the speech he had made on the 22nd of February, 1869, in proposing the measure of that year on the subject of Political Pensions, with special reference to the following passage :—

The civil officer, who is not a political officer, is presumed, after his term of service (subject to the conditions of the Act,<sup>1</sup> and on the supposition of his good conduct), to have a right to a pension. The political officer, however, is not presumed by the Act to have anything that can be called a right to a pension. The political pensions which are contemplated by the Act appear to have been intended by the Legislature to prevent the public inconvenience which might arise from the discouragement of men of capacity, but not of great fortune, from engaging in the public service if this were to happen, that those who had been called to fill certain stations, and to hold a certain social rank as servants of the Crown, were, after filling those offices, with the various responsibilities attached to them, and possibly after conferring great services on the country, to be left in such a condition, by no fault of their own, but it may be in consequence of their own self-denial in devoting themselves to the public service, that they might be destitute of adequate means of supporting their social station.<sup>2</sup>

As Mr. Childers had, by taking service under the Crown, given up a fairly assured, and probably increasing income, for a very uncertain one, he stated to Mr. Gladstone that he felt no hesitation in making the declaration required.<sup>3</sup> The First Lord of the Treasury thereupon recommended his application to the Queen, and her Majesty signed a royal warrant, granting the

<sup>1</sup> 4 & 5 William IV. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, Vol. 194, p. 166. The construction of a Gladstonian sentence is here noticeable.

<sup>3</sup> By sect. 6 of the Act of 1869, Mr. Childers had also to declare that he was entitled, while not holding office under the Crown, to an annuity of £866 from the Colony of Victoria, in the nature of compensation for the loss of a permanent office, and so long as this was received, his pension would be reduced by this amount.

pension, or, rather, "assigning" it, for it did not come into operation till the Liberal Government went out of office in 1885, and was suspended during the short Ministry of 1886.

Although after 1886 he did not speak often in the House, he (in 1888) attended the Church Congress in Manchester, and took a leading part in the proceedings at that meeting.

The subject he dealt with was one which seems to grow more important every year—the way to deal with the unequal distribution of the funds of the Church of England. He had been pressed by his friend the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee) to speak on Church Finance in 1880, and in 1886 he had again been appealed to; but the demands of office had on each occasion rendered it impossible for him to comply.

As far back as 1868 (at the time of the Irish Church struggle) he had written<sup>1</sup> :—

The Church of Ireland has fallen because she has utterly failed in her mission, and is a mere garrison political institution, under the guise of a branch of the English Church, capable of no religious energy or development, except towards the narrowest form of Puritanism. Happily the last thirty years have seen the opposite movement (the most opposed to Puritanism at any rate) in England, and, with this, a revival of broad popular tendencies to social action, and a spirit of inquiry most favourable to the real doctrines of the Church. To my mind this vitality shows that the Church is quite capable of far greater self-government, such as the Establishment in Scotland, or our own Church in those Colonies where the State *is* connected with it, enjoys. But with this must go a revolution in the treatment of the revenues of the Church, and the admission of the laity to a *proper* share of her government. I firmly believe that, if this is

<sup>1</sup> Letter to the Rev. Thomas Carr, Rector of Barming, Kent, dated 20th of December, 1868.

done, if the reasonable latitude which *all* laymen would like to see within the Church is given, if her revenues are distributed on the principle that her ministers receive "stipends," not "benefices," and if the laity are admitted to their share of administration, the warning of the Irish Church will strengthen, not weaken you. But, if you are to be brought up with some theory of Church and State, or of Church government unintelligible in the nineteenth century, and if the present fear of development continues and you hug the very chains which stop your growth, merely offering the passive resistance of "non possumus" to reform, and all the while allow these farcical parodies of Romanism to bring you into ridicule, you must take the consequences.

The plan Mr. Childers propounded at Manchester was bold and far-reaching. His primary object was to make the Church's estate meet her requirements, and, to this end, considered it quite practicable to arrange scales of stipend in which due regard would be had to the work and to the length of service of the clergy. "Church property," he said, "is not managed on economical principles; on the contrary, much of it is wasted or applied to unnecessary purposes. There exists a vague and shadowy feeling that in some sense the Church revenues of a locality or a district belong to the inhabitants of that district, and that, if a part of them be diverted to supply the religious needs of another district, some injustice will be done to the former. Of course the law has never recognized any such principle. Episcopal and capitular property has been diverted for the use of other dioceses without any special regard to the particular district in which it is found. As an illustration again of the indifference with which these shadowy local claims are regarded, I may remind you that a patron having the advowson of two livings, one hundred or two hundred miles apart, one with an income of £1000 and the other of £200 a year, may, if he obtains the requisite official approval, permanently turn the two into livings of £600

a year without asking the consent of the parish unfavourably affected. It seems to me that this undefined objection to the redistribution of Church property must be boldly grappled with, and that, excepting of course very recent private endowments, say those of the present century, the whole income of the Church should be considered applicable to her wants wheresoever and in whatever proportion those wants may arise." The one great difficulty he recognized was the pecuniary value of private patronage. He proposed a scheme to put an end to the sale of advowsons by compensating the patrons—the compensation to be advanced by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners out of the general funds of the Church. He considered that a portion of the advance might well be repaid to the Commissioners in the shape of a terminable annuity charged upon a particular living after its first vacancy ; and he expressed the opinion that, subject to certain reservations in regard to the control of the State, Parliament might give the Church increased power to regulate her own financial affairs.

"My proposal," he concluded, "admits of no compromise as to the sale of advowsons,<sup>1</sup> which must be absolutely forbidden if Church finance is to be put upon a permanently sound footing. On the other hand, it is liberal to patrons, and incidentally adds to the influence of the laity in the choice of their minister."

These views were considered by the majority of Liberals as impossible in the present day. They looked askance at proposals which had even an appearance of admitting a right of the Church of England to claim her revenues as independent of control of the State. But such a claim Mr. Childers had never admitted. He had always held that Church property was public property. When Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was frequently addressed

<sup>1</sup> These sales are now regulated by the *Benefices Act, 1898*, s. 1.

as to how far the Established Church is supported out of public funds, and his answer to a Welsh correspondent gives very fairly his views as to whether Church property belongs to the State or not.

"You ask me," he wrote, "a question which has been the subject of controversy for centuries. I can only give you my individual opinion, which is that 'Church property is public property.' To your inquiry, therefore, whether 'the Church is maintained at the expense of the State,' I should reply that, in my opinion, it is. To your further inquiry, whether 'the bishops and clergy are paid their salaries out of the Imperial Treasury,' I should reply that they are not, with the exceptions to which you refer (prison chaplains, and those of the army and navy). But, with reference to your last words (whether any money is paid out of the public purse in support of the Established Church), the 'public purse' contains and pays away much that is not appropriated by votes of Parliament. Whether bishops and clergymen receive their stipends from glebes, or from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, or from Parliamentary appropriations, they are, to my mind, equally supported from the public purse.

"Others, however, are not of this opinion.

"I think it might interest you, if you care to know what was the opinion of Churchmen on this subject two centuries and a half ago, to read 'Selden on Tithes.'

Relief of the poorer clergy was considered by Mr. Childers one of the first duties of Churchmen. While Secretary for War he had made the acquaintance of Dr. Benson, Bishop of Truro, at the meetings of the Governors of Wellington College (of which the Bishop had been the first Master), and the elevation of the Bishop to the Primacy had given Mr. Childers great satisfaction. It will, however, be seen that he opposed the scheme for spending a large sum on the formation of the Church House at a time when the incomes of many of the clergy were being very seriously curtailed.

*To the Archbishop of Canterbury.*

October 17, 1886.

I received a few days ago, in the north of Scotland, your letter asking me to become a member of the General Committee of the "Church House," which it is proposed to erect as a fitting memorial, by the Church, of the Royal Jubilee in 1887. I should, under ordinary circumstances, be desirous to render every assistance in my power to any good work which you might wish to see promoted by Churchmen, whether or not I liked all its details. But the present proposal is one of so special a character that I do not think I ought to add my name to the list of its advocates, unless I were prepared heartily to endorse it.

With the greatest respect for the opinion of the Bishop of Carlisle,<sup>1</sup> and the other eminent authorities who are promoting it, I doubt whether the erection of a Church House in London would be a fitting memorial of the Jubilee. The Church has at the present time several very great needs, especially in connection with the emoluments of the poorer clergy; and, in spite of the arguments in the Bishop of Carlisle's second letter, I think that they should have precedence over what will be a convenience to only a few clergymen, and those not the least wealthy, of their body. I doubt very much whether at the present time the aggregate official incomes of the clergy are from year to year increased by anything like the interest on £350,000. On the contrary, a large number are receiving far less than formerly, and *their* relief appears to me a matter of much greater importance to the Church generally than the erection of a building for Convocation.

I am extremely sorry to differ on this question from those on whose judgment I generally place the fullest reliance.

Of Mr. Childers's religious and ecclesiastical views the present Dean of Ripon writes:—

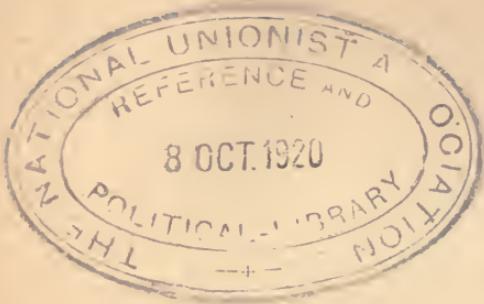
His family had been strongly influenced by the revival of Evangelical religion in the early part of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of his own religious life was formed on this model; and when at school at Cheam, under Dr. Mayo, an earnest clergyman of the same type,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Harvey Goodwin.



BELVEDERE, KENT, THE SEAT OF LORD EARDLEY.

[To face p. 274, Vol. II.



he formed one of a little society who met to read the Bible. His early marriage and rapid rise to positions of responsibility in Australia, and the new associations of the Antipodes, drew out a breadth and sincereness of character which remained throughout his later life. He was under twenty-eight years old when he drew up, with the assistance of Dr. Perry, the first Bishop of Melbourne, the Act<sup>1</sup> for the regulation of the Church there, which passed successfully through the Colonial Legislature.

After his return to England, and his entry into Parliament, he was not called on to take action in ecclesiastical legislation;<sup>2</sup> but he followed attentively such measures as the Clerical Subscription Act of 1865 (a liberating measure), and the Acts for Shortened Services and a Revised Lectionary in 1872; and voted, though against Mr. Gladstone, for the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874. He took a special interest in the Church services, and had made a special study of the origin of the English Liturgy, and at one time had it in contemplation to write upon them, comparing the two Prayer-books of Edward VI. He kept up the habit of family prayers, even during his busiest time in office, and enjoyed the friendship of ministers of religion of all kinds, ranging from Cardinal Manning to Dr. Edward White, whose views and books on Conditional Immortality created considerable interest. He liked to see the churches open for prayers on week days, and used playfully to say that this was his test of a Christian country. He may be called a Churchman of the centre, valuing men according to their true character rather than their ecclesiastical associations. He was disposed to view public measures affecting religion from the point of view of liberty and trustfulness, but the interests of religion itself were always of first importance to him. He considered that prohibition of marriage with a deceased wife's sister was not justified by any sufficient authority; but he resisted disestablishment in England as not likely to lead either to peace or to the religious good of the people.

Mr. Gladstone from time to time consulted him about Church patronage, and asked him to name any persons whose promotion he thought desirable. When he was

<sup>1</sup> 18 Vict., No. 45 (Victorian Statutes, Vol. VI. p. 530).

<sup>2</sup> The Dean of Ripon probably did not mean to include in this the Irish Church Act.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, he often used his Church patronage to promote naval chaplains whose merits he had observed when he was at the Admiralty.<sup>1</sup> His connection with the Duchy gave him an association with the Royal Chapel at the Savoy, which he maintained to the end of his life.

This association has already been referred to, and was perpetuated after his death by the brass tablet placed on the western wall of the chapel in commemoration of his services and his character as a Christian and a Churchman.

In 1889 symptoms of a nerve affection of the shoulder began to show themselves ; the doctors saw no cause for anxiety, but they advised change and recreation. So, with a view of avoiding the English winter, and at the same time of carrying out a cherished project, Mr. Childers determined to visit India. He had long wished to see the East, and also to revisit his old colony—Victoria. The latter was a voyage he thought that he could afford to postpone. One can see Australia when one is eighty, he said, but India required younger limbs. A tour abroad was an unfailing source of recreation and pleasure to him. “It is difficult to comprehend,” Mr. Gladstone once wrote,

<sup>1</sup> He always felt much interest in the welfare of the naval and military chaplains ; and on one occasion he obtained an alteration in the Regulations to enable an army chaplain, who had distinguished himself in action in Afghanistan, to obtain the Victoria Cross.

*From Sir Frederick Roberts.*

*August 28, 1881.*

I trust you will permit me to offer my best thanks for your great kindness in the matter of the Victoria Cross for the Rev. James Williams Adams. I know how much trouble it required to get an alteration made in the V. C. Warrant, and I can assure you I feel deeply grateful for all you have done. I am very sensible of all you have done for me since my arrival in England last November.

Mr. Adams has since been Honorary Chaplain to the Queen and Prince of Wales, and Vicar of Stow Bardolph, Norfolk.

"how these long journeys can be advantageous to your health." But travelling always seemed to do him good, and the occasion was opportune. Among other of his friends at that time in India were Lord and Lady Reay at Bombay, and on their staff was Colonel (now General) Lyttelton, who had been Mr. Childers's private secretary at the War Office. Lord and Lady Lansdowne were at Calcutta, and Sir Frederick and Lady Roberts at Army Head-quarters.

They landed in Bombay on the 1st of December, 1889, and, travelling leisurely by Poona, reached Calcutta, whence, after a short stay at Government House, they passed on to Darjeeling.

*To his Son, Spencer.*

DARJEELING, January 4, 1890.

New Year's Day opened in Calcutta with a great parade and review of the troops, and in the evening there was a banquet of above ninety, at which were all the most distinguished men at Calcutta. I had a good deal of interesting conversation, chiefly with Judges, among whom there were two Hindoos and one Mahomedan, the latter having only one wife, and she a Christian. I also talked to the Hindoo Chancellor of the University and to several distinguished members of Council, besides the two bishops. The Bishop of Calcutta<sup>1</sup> is a very pleasant man; his Roman Catholic *confrère*,<sup>2</sup> the Archbishop of something *in partibus*, has a very fine flowing beard, and wore a most gorgeous garment.

He, or his Madras brother, told me that they expected Sir Lintorn Simmons's mission from Malta to Rome would settle the old quarrel with the Goa patriarch and authorities. I remember the Pope telling me in 1878-79 that the only impediment to his settling it in our favour was the want of an accredited envoy from the British Government. Without this he was at the mercy of the Portuguese, who had a concordat in full vigour.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edward Ralph Johnson, D.D., LL.D.

<sup>2</sup> Most Rev. Paul Goethals, S.J.

<sup>3</sup> Of the archiepiscopal province of Goa, two suffragan sees are in British India, two in Portuguese territory.

The next morning we prepared for our visit here, and I spent an hour with Sir George Chesney,<sup>1</sup> and nearly two hours with Sir F. Roberts, who came down twenty-four hours sooner than he had intended, on purpose to meet us. In these three hours I learnt pretty well all the military condition and plans of India, and I think that the latter are fairly reasonable. One or two things are still wanting ; guns, and a clearer relationship between the Regular and the Reserve in India. I heard a good deal about the relative efficiency of the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay armies, and the condition of Frontier and Northern troops. Both Roberts and Chesney were particularly pleasant.

We started for Darjeeling at four. It is an expedition of about 380 miles. Darjeeling itself is on the precipitous sites of several hills looking down 4000 to 6000 feet to the stream at their foot. It must be very populous, and all round are tea planters' bungalows, etc. In the town itself is the great Sanitarium, one of the glories of Bengal, which saves, I know not how many lives yearly ; a nice church in a commanding site ; the late Governor's excellent house, and endless villas.

We walked about it from eleven till two this morning, part of the time under the charge of Mr. Paul,<sup>2</sup> the Deputy Commissioner. He is at this moment carrying on here a negotiation with the Chinese and Thibetans about the spheres of British and Chino-Thibetan influence. There was some fortifying, or, at any rate, defence building, in reference to the old quarrel last year, when we said plainly that we would not concede a yard of our Protectorate, and we are also contending for a trade route into Thibet and China this way. If you look at the map you will see that Darjeeling is part of British Sikkim, pushed forward due north between the independent States of Nepaul and Bhotan. It is a curious little wedge, but it may lead to important results as to Thibet. The boundary of Thibet proper, a distant snowline 20,000 feet high, is visible from the hills above the town.

From Darjeeling they followed the usual tourist's route by Benares, Lucknow, and Delhi to Lahore and the Punjab.

<sup>1</sup> Military Member of Council ; author of the "Battle of Dorking."

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Willis Paul, C.I.E.

January 20, 1890.

Benares, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Agra, Muttra, and Delhi have each their speciality or *cachet*. Benares and Muttra are the most ancient Hindoo cities, with numerous temples and holy places ; great ghats (or washing or burning stairs) down to the sacred rivers ; no tombs, much dirt and evidences of gross superstition. Delhi and Agra are essentially Mahometan, with noble mosques, and, above all, magnificent tombs ; the capitals of great conquering emperors ; little or no evidence of superstition, but of a pure, if a mistaken, faith in One God. Being Mahometan towns, you see fewer women about, and, unfortunately, fewer varieties of costume, white being the colour worn by the great majority. Finally, Lucknow and Cawnpore, although cities of a great Mahometan dynasty, and with some mosques and tombs and fine palaces, recall to you, by their whole aspect, British valour or misfortune, and the scenes of the Mutiny are almost pictured before your eyes. Of course there are Hindoos there in abundance, just as they are a goodish minority in Delhi and Agra, but it is modern history which *sante aux yeux* ; as it is the noble deeds of the Moguls in Delhi and Agra, their reckless profusion and magnificent architecture, with miles and miles of ruined cities around, and the older corrupt Aryan faith and mysterious system of Hinduism in its two sacred cities. In all there is more or less a trace of pure Buddhism, or rather of the Jains, who dissented, with almost equal purity, from Buddha ; and here and there the old native Christian of Portuguese connection, converted by the Jesuits, peeps out in humble chapels and despised condition. I have told you what strikes us most in these respects.

After a short visit to Lahore, where they received a hearty welcome from Sir James<sup>1</sup> and Lady Lyall, they travelled on to Peshawur, and, going beyond the ordinary tourists' track, they visited the Peshawur Frontier and the Pishin Valley between Quetta and Candahar. Mr. Childers had a lively recollection of Frontier affairs ; one of the first questions which the Government of 1880 had had to

<sup>1</sup> Now Secretary of the Judicial and Public Department, India Office.

deal with was, it will be remembered, the succession to the vacant throne of Cabul, almost immediately followed by the Maiwand disaster and the relief of Candahar.<sup>1</sup> It was, therefore, with the keenest interest that he inspected the tunnel being constructed through the Khojak mountains, and discussed with Sir Robert Sandeman and Colonel Warburton the political and military arrangements for strengthening the Quetta and Peshawur frontiers.

PESHAWUR, *January 24*

The Commissioner, Colonel Ommaney,<sup>2</sup> met us at the station and took us to his very pretty house, situated on rising ground some way from the city. He drove us before dark through the city—which has a curious appearance, having been nearly all burnt some years ago, and rebuilt mainly one storey high ; then through the best bazaars, which are very extensive, to the great gate, to the top of which we went for the view, which is fine.

In the enclosure beyond the gate it is curious to see a mosque, a Hindoo temple, and the Zenana Mission House close together. We returned by another road, and visited the Church Missionary Society's Native Christian church, built like a temple with a cross at the top. It has some good carved woodwork, and it is remarkable to see the curtains, which practically separate the Native women from the congregation, but retaining for them a full view of the altar, pulpit, etc. Afterwards Colonel Ommaney drove me to the club (where there must have been about fifty men and thirty ladies), very conveniently arranged and furnished.

To-day we were up early and started in an open carriage for Fort Jumrood, ten miles off, at the entrance of the Khyber Pass.

We were received by the Colonel of the Khyber Rifles, who made me inspect his regiment, after which we started in dogcarts, with very good little horses and boy drivers, eleven miles through the eastern part of the Khyber Pass to Ali Musjid.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Vol. I. p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> Who had recently accompanied, as Chief Political Officer, the second Black Mountain Expedition.

We were in all seven dogcarts, and we took about an hour and a half to get up to Ali Musjid. Nothing could have been more interesting.

We had good maps and books, and were able to identify the site of the action in the last war, and the different movements clearly.

Before walking up to the Fort we went on nearly a mile on the Caravan road, towards Lundi Kotal, and then got our luncheon and returned to Jumrood by four. There the old Colonel (who fought in the Mutiny) presented me to his officers, and gave me some tea in the Fort, and we got back to Colonel Ommaney's by 5.30. This was a most delightful day, the weather fine, the dust laid by last Wednesday's rain, and the caravans endlessly long, with every variety of camel, horse, donkey, etc., and carrying every kind of merchandise. I particularly noticed the loads of rock salt taken from India and the bales of carpets brought the other way.

*January 29, 1890.*

Yesterday we were up early and went by the 8.40 train to Mouridki. Sir F. Roberts's carriage met us at the station and took us to his tent, where soon appeared Prince Albert Victor,<sup>1</sup> and in due course we all went about a mile and a half to an enclosure close to the saluting point. Lady Roberts drove Kate in her pony carriage, which was in a most prominent position, and I stood by it.

A great many people came up to us, some whom I knew, others whom I did not, but nearly all of whom knew you or poor Francis.

The march past began at eleven and lasted till after two. There were fourteen Native Cavalry regiments, three British, two or three batteries of Horse Artillery, and some of the Native State troops whom we had seen when we came through Lahore the week before. In all, some 8000 cavalry and artillery were on the ground. The march past was excellent, the dust being taken by a light wind away from the Staff and the spectators. The gallop past was very effective, as was the general advance, but there were five falls, one of which was likely to be fatal. After the review was over, Sir Frederick addressed the Native and other officers, drawn up in a circle round him, as to the use of cavalry, also the great importance of constant

<sup>1</sup> H.R.H. the late Duke of Clarence.

practice in horsemanship, and the use of the sword and lance; and then he announced the Queen's order that the 1st Punjab Cavalry should be called "Prince Albert Victor's Own."

We all lunched in Sir Frederick's tent. I sat next the Prince, and he talked to me a good deal about home.

The day was very fine, as was the day before, when, as we crossed the Jhelum, and for many miles afterwards, the view of the Himalayas in Cashmere was glorious, not very far short of that from Darjeeling. At Peshawur the snow mountains, 140 or 150 miles away, were clearly visible on Sunday.

Forty-eight hours took them from the Khyber to the Bolan (crossing the dreary desert between Jacobabad and Dadur). How different to the days of Sir Charles Napier and of the awful march of the Army of the Indus in 1839!

MITTRI STATION, *January 31.*

We are halting at a place named in your letter of the 2nd of July, 1877, as the point at which you crossed the line of telegraph from Jacobabad to Quetta, a day's march from Dadur, at the mouth of the Bolan Pass. What a journey you must have had across the desert of sand, in which we have been travelling all the morning! We recognize the "Marri Mountains" and the "Katchi Plain," which you so graphically described, and an old man has ridden up on a good horse who might be your friendly sheikh! I have always had a lively recollection of your account of that march, which killed poor Hobday, and on which none of you ought to have been sent in June, but I never expected actually to cross your line of march and to verify your description.<sup>1</sup> We have been very unlucky, our Native driver having charged locked points between twelve and one in the night, and detained us for eight hours.

<sup>1</sup> In June, 1877, Lieut.-Col. (then Lieut.) Childers had marched with the 5th Company of the Bengal Sappers from Mooltan down the right bank of the Indus and through the Bolan Pass to Quetta, re-occupied by the Indian Government after an interval of thirty-five years.

## SPINTANGI, 4 P.M., PISHIN VALLEY.

We are now forty miles up this extraordinary pass, the most difficult line, I should think, in the world to keep in order.

The train runs under great heights, twisting and winding every few hundred yards; there is not a particle of vegetation, and the slopes are of friable earth, which evidently washes down with every shower of rain. It is quite different from any other pass we have seen, and the works are most solid and apparently well designed.

We enjoy looking at the wild, long-haired Beloochees in the fields, almost all armed, and the long strings of camels and flocks and herds all passing along the bed of the stream. It is the most out-of-the-world place we have reached in India, and the change from the level plain and sandy desert is very refreshing. We are out of British territory, and in Beloochistan proper.

QUETTA, February 2 (Sunday).

After I finished writing on the 31st, we steadily rose through the long pass, and at about ten o'clock p.m. reached the marvellous "rift" which makes this line so remarkable. At 8.30 a.m. we started in a short train, consisting of our carriage and two others, for the Khojak tunnel, an expedition fixed for yesterday, so that we might accompany the Duke of Connaught.<sup>1</sup> For about sixty miles the line crosses a fairly level country, but with hills on both sides; but at Killa Abdulla, the terminus for passenger trains, we left the regular line, and went on with two great "Jumbo" engines up the "Construction" line to the mouth of the tunnel, some ten miles. The regular line is not finished at places, but at others is used by the Construction trains, which the Jumbo engines take up inclines of one in fifteen. In this way we made short cuts to the mouth of the tunnel, 7000 feet above the sea. Here we alighted, and went by trolley 3500 feet along the tunnel to a shaft, which we ascended in a cage some 220 feet.

At the top we walked to the foot of an incline one in three, up which we were drawn by a rope, half a mile to the top of the hill, and a little above the Quetta and Candahar road, along which hundreds of camels, etc.,

<sup>1</sup> At that time Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army.

were passing. Then we had a quarter of a mile of level line, and then down another steep incline to a point a little above the north entrance of the tunnel, which we visited. It points direct to Candahar—I think a political mistake ; and I doubt altogether the wisdom of the tunnel, which has been built at fabulous expense, and might have been avoided by adopting the original plan of 1879, and curving to the left through a pass, lengthening, I admit, the line by six or seven miles. We then examined the plans, and walked and were taken back to the top, to a sort of look-out place, where the view is best. The day was very fine, and we could see clearly the hills beyond Candahar, which is itself hidden by another low range.

The intervening plain looks like a sea, with island rocks here and there. Some nine miles across this is the frontier, with the new little town of Chaman, where there will be a station and barracks. We got back by 7.45, having inspected a regiment and some cavalry en route.

ON THE RAILWAY NEAR SUKKUR, *February 7, 1890.*

I have had a great deal of talk with Sandeman on frontier questions. I think he has very clear ideas—thought out, and independent ; but different from those of the late Sir Charles Macgregor.<sup>1</sup> He has greatly impressed me.<sup>2</sup>

How glad we were of rest on Sunday, only getting a drive in the afternoon, round the cantonment and town—now being planted and irrigated throughout—and a walk round the large compound and garden with Lady Sandeman, who explained to me the “karez” system of water supply, which is the special characteristic of this country. On Monday I rode with Major Gaisford, the political agent, and Major Hart,<sup>3</sup> R.E., and two others, to see the

<sup>1</sup> He had been appointed general officer to command the Punjab Frontier Force ; but his health broke down, and he died at Cairo in 1887.

<sup>2</sup> “Perhaps the most important of his (Sandeman’s) achievements was this—that he succeeded in revolutionizing the attitude of the Government of India towards the frontier tribes, and made our ‘sphere of influence’ on the Western border no longer a mere diplomatic expression, but a reality.”—Lord Roberts, “Forty-one Years in India.”

<sup>3</sup> Then Director of Military Education in India, now Sir Reginald Clare Hart, K.C.B.

defence works, some of which are at ten miles distance, and the aggregate strength of which is far greater than I had conceived to be possible ; of course there is still a great want of guns, but the R.E.s have done their work thoroughly. The next day, the 4th, we started early for the Bolan Pass. We all went in the train to the head of the Pass, and then some of us trolleyed down as far as was practicable, while the train only went as far as Dozan. It was a little ticklish trolleying along rails, over steep chasms, which supported, instead of being supported by, the iron sleepers ; but a pilot trolley went first. The line was utterly ruined for the time by a violent storm of rain in August last, and Government have not yet ordered its thorough repair.

It is, as you know, an extraordinary pass, hardly wider in places than the Bolan stream which runs down it. We went in all some thirty miles down it, and returned just after Sir R. Sandeman had arrived from his great success in his Zhob Mission, details of which he gave us. We visited the Soldiers' Institute at Quetta in connection with the Worcestershire regiment, of which Colonel Carrington is the commanding officer. The General and he took us round at 7.30, and there must have been four hundred to five hundred men in the different rooms. Sir F. Roberts has done a great deal to make these soldiers' clubs popular. Then we wound up our visit with a pleasant dinner party, to which Sir G.<sup>1</sup> and Lady White, the Evatts, and some other pleasant people came.

Yesterday, the 6th, we left Quetta at 8 a.m., with many regrets, having greatly enjoyed and profited by our visit to this remote possession of England, possibly someday to be the scene of conflict, if not, of great progress and security. Nothing could have been kinder than our treatment by Sir Robert and Lady Sandeman, and, indeed, by all whom we met. We came back by our former route. Before reaching the "rift" we got upon a sort of trolley seat, rigged out on the buffers in front of the engine, and so saw to perfection this strange passage through the perpendicular rocks, cut as it were with a knife, then a high bridge, and a long curve up to the head of the stream.

Below there is nothing very interesting which we had not noticed coming up. We looked again at Mittri, where

<sup>1</sup> General Sir George White, the hero of Ladysmith.

you passed the telegraph poles below Sibi in 1877. It was a bright, still, moonlight night. We wondered whether you too had a moon across that hot desert. This morning we awoke at Rohri Junction, and had a good view of the Sukhar bridge, which, I must confess, is one of the ugliest great works I have ever seen. We are now at Khanpur.

JEYPORE, *February 10.*

We arrived here last night, and were most hospitably received by Colonel Prideaux<sup>1</sup> and his young wife. He was one of the Abyssinian captives on account of whose detention and cruel imprisonment war was declared in 1867. He is the Resident at this important Court, the Maharajah having a revenue of between one and two millions of rupees, and about two million subjects, 170,000 of whom live in the capital.

The present Maharajah is a dull man, but his predecessor (not his father, for he was adopted) was a very enlightened ruler, as may be judged from the appearance of the town and palace, lit with gas, well paved, watered, and drained—the most modern place we have seen. We visited the palace, stables, armoury, tigers, etc., to-day, and are to see the School of Art, hospitals, gardens, etc. Everything is being beflagged, belamped, etc., for Prince Albert Victor, who comes the day after we leave, and is to kill tigers and other game, and to have a grand dinner in the palace, and to be present at a Durbar.

From Jeypore they returned to Bombay, and sailing in the P. and O. ss. *Peninsular* on the 7th of March, arrived at Brindisi on the 20th.

<sup>1</sup> Author of the "Lay of the Himyarites," and "Notes for a Bibliography of Edward FitzGerald."

## CHAPTER XX.

## LAST YEARS.

1890-1896.

Failing Health—Resigns his Seat—The Financial Relations Commission—Death of Mrs. Childers—Last Illness—Review of his Character.

THE tour in India had been a holiday full of immense interest to Mr. Childers, and had afforded pleasant relaxation to his mind. But to him physically the benefit was doubtful. According to his own record, they had travelled over nine thousand miles by railway in twelve weeks. To most men of sixty-two such journeys in a European climate are trying enough ; how much more so in the climate of India to one whose health was not robust? Soon after his arrival home it became evident that the old trouble in his shoulder had not been overcome, and in November, 1890, it had so much increased that the doctors ordered him to leave England at once, and to go abroad the following winter also. In this verdict he plainly read the end of his Parliamentary life. He regretfully announced the fact to his Chief, who expressed himself extremely concerned, yet hoped still for his eventual recovery ; but he considered him clearly right in his course. “The body is more than raiment, and political life is the raiment, not the body,” wrote Mr. Gladstone.

He spent the winter in the South of France, and in

the spring of 1891 returned to England, only to announce to his friends in Edinburgh his inability to attend to his Parliamentary duties any further ; he was strongly pressed by his supporters to retain his seat till the Dissolution. "They have treated me so well," he wrote, "that I am reluctant to oppose a strong wish of this kind, although my retaining the seat when I am obliged to be away may lead to misconceptions."

*From Sir William Harcourt.*

MALWOOD, LYNDHURST, September 23, 1891.

I have received with deep regret the announcement of your intended retirement, even for a short time, from Parliament. I have always regarded you as one of my best and kindest comrades in arms. As one grows older (by-the-by the question of seniority has never been settled yet between us<sup>1</sup>) one learns to value such friends more. To tell you the truth, I rather envy you an excuse for retiring for a time from this troubled and troublesome scene. I think if we come into office you will rejoin us in Opposition in a very short time. I am sure you are right to take your rest in time, and also to postpone the resignation of your seat till the Dissolution. Pray remember me most kindly to your wife, and let me hear of you before you leave England.

In 1892 the General Election occurred, which again restored the Liberals to office, though scarcely to power. It was a great trial to Mr. Childers to have to stand aside, and take no part in the conflict which raged around. He wrote to congratulate Mr. Gladstone on the result of the elections, and had a warm and grateful reply, expressing sympathy with the sense of vacancy which he (Mr. Childers) must be feeling. Mr. Gladstone added that it was his privilege to be able to look back upon their early co-operation together, to remember the strong and valuable aid which he had received from him under the Governments of

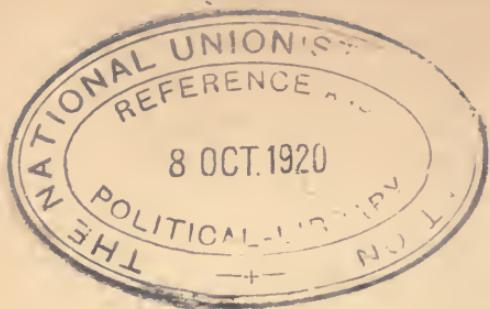
<sup>1</sup> Sir William was by about four months the younger.



MR. CHILDERS AT MENTONE.

*From a Portrait by Milly Childers.*

[To face p. 288, Vol. II.



Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell, and to believe with satisfaction that Mr. Childers had left his mark upon one—and more than one—of the great departments of the State, in such a way as to give him a distinguished place in the annals of British Administration.

Two years later the news of the great Liberal Chief's own retirement came to him almost as a surprise; and another friendly correspondence passed between them.

In the spring of 1894 he was so far better that he thought himself able to undertake the duties of Chairman of the Irish Financial Relations Commission. For his own health's sake it would have been better had he not attempted the task, but on public grounds it cannot be regretted. No document he ever drew up in his best days stated a case more clearly than his draft report on the Financial Relations of Great Britain and Ireland.

It was only circulated to the members of the Commission a very short time before his last illness, and he therefore never had the advantage of hearing his colleagues' criticisms. His deductions would not have met the views of those members who represented the Conservative side of the Commission, and in many respects his draft would not have received the approval of the Nationalist party.

The varying reports which the Commissioners jointly or severally presented were prefaced by a memorandum signed by the majority, Sir David Barbour and Sir Thomas Sutherland dissenting. In this memorandum the signatories<sup>1</sup> (eleven in number) after referring to the death of their colleague, Sir Robert Hamilton,<sup>2</sup> write :—

<sup>1</sup> Right Hon. O'Conor Don (who was now Chairman), Lord Farrer, Lord Welby, Hon. E. Blake, M.P., Bertram Wodehouse Currie, W. A. Hunter, Charles E. Martin, J. E. Redmond, M.P., Thomas Sexton, Henry F. Slattery, G. W. Wolff, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> Under-Secretary for Ireland, 1882-86; Governor of Tasmania, 1886-92.

... In last January, after the evidence had been closed, we had the further misfortune of losing our Chairman, Mr. Childers, who had given to the subject-matter of our inquiry the most unremitting attention, and to whose mature judgment and wise counsels we looked for guidance in endeavouring to bring our labours to a satisfactory and useful conclusion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Before his death, our late Chairman, Mr. Childers, prepared a draft report, which he directed should be distributed amongst us. That report embodies the views at which he had arrived, after an exhaustive consideration of all the evidence that had been given to us. Any conclusions so arrived at by a man of his experience as an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, and with his intimate knowledge of finance, must command the greatest respect. We have entered his draft report in the record of our proceedings.

The financial relation of Ireland to Great Britain is still one of the questions of the day, and such a subject cannot be done justice to in a few sentences. One very important feature in the question should not, however, be passed by. For the first time, a high authority (such as was this Royal Commission) has admitted the fact of over-taxation in Ireland; for, in their memorandum, the eleven (out of thirteen) Commissioners state that they are practically unanimous on the following conclusions:—

1. That Great Britain and Ireland must, for the purposes of this inquiry, be considered as separate entities.
2. That the Act of Union imposed upon Ireland a burden which, as events showed, she was unable to bear.
3. That the increase of taxation laid upon Ireland between 1853 and 1860 was not justified by the then existing circumstances.
4. That identity of rates of taxation does not necessarily involve equality of burden.
5. That whilst the actual tax revenue of Ireland is about one-eleventh of that of Great Britain, the relative taxable capacity of Ireland is very much smaller, and is not estimated by any of us as exceeding one-twentieth.

Mr. Childers clearly agreed with 1, 2, 4, and 5. In reference to 3, he had written in the draft report (par. 310):—

Several of the witnesses before the Committee of the House of Commons which inquired into these matters in the years 1864 and 1865, proposed, as a relief to Ireland, an exemption from the Income-Tax, which was extended to Ireland in 1853, ten years after it had been re-imposed in Great Britain. It is worthy of observation, as a sign of the change of thought and feeling in these matters, that no witness before the present Commission proposed this step.

He went on to recommend, as countervailing Ireland's over-taxation, an annual allocation of revenue in her favour, for promoting her material prosperity and social welfare; and he estimated the extent of the necessary adjustment at an annual sum of £2,250,000 for a term of years.

Five out of the eleven signatories stated that they might, without much modification, adopt Mr. Childers's conclusions, but considered they were not called upon by the terms of the reference to suggest modifications in the existing system, or any method of re-adjustment.

In those conclusions on which the eleven signatories were unanimous, they did not deal with the last question referred to the Commission (namely, to report as to "the Imperial expenditure to which it is considered equitable that Ireland should contribute"). The answer proposed by Mr. Childers in the draft report was "that so long as Great Britain and Ireland continue to be united under one Parliament, it is, in our opinion, impossible to discriminate between objects of Imperial expenditure to which Ireland should, and those to which she should not, contribute."

During the winter of 1894-95 the Commission had proceeded to Ireland, and had taken much evidence in

Dublin. Here Mr. Childers renewed his friendship with Lord and Lady Wolseley, who were at that time occupying the residence of the Commander of the Forces. At the Vice-regal Lodge he visited Lord Houghton,<sup>1</sup> the son of his old colleague at Pontefract, who was at this time Lord-Lieutenant, and during the stay of the Commission in Dublin he lived in his own son's quarters in the old Royal Hospital, where he delighted to see his grandchildren gathered around him.

He was now to sustain another severe blow. In the spring of 1895 Mrs. Childers, who had been ill throughout the winter, died somewhat suddenly. During the sixteen years of their married life she had entered with the keenest enthusiasm into his political career; and her companionship had enabled him to bear the stress of office when most severe. Her loss greatly affected him. Though he was still as keen as ever in intellect and memory, and able to follow the events of the General Election with the closest interest, his physical power diminished, and his handwriting would sometimes be almost illegible.

In the autumn he seemed better. He made a tour of some of the English Cathedral towns; visited Mont St. Michel and Carnac, and other places in Brittany. As of old, he was benefited by the change of scene, but now inevitable partings came to try him. His married daughter, Mrs. Stephen Simeon, was obliged to leave England for New Zealand, and his son, Spencer, was ordered to South Africa; and he was left with only one of his children, his daughter Milly, near him. He passed his last Christmas (of 1895) at Cantley, and then went to Hickleton, where, in Lord Halifax's chapel, he received the Sacrament for the last time. Shortly after his return to London he had a severe cold, which developed into influenza. On the 21st of January the symptoms were

<sup>1</sup> Now Earl of Crewe.



Paris photo.

Walker & Cockerell photo.

*Katharine Ann  
second wife of Mr. Childers.*



so serious that Sir William Broadbent was sent for, whose verdict was that he could not recover. He remained in a half-conscious state, though at intervals he seemed to be aware of what was passing around him, and, just before the end came, he sent his love to each of his children. He passed away peacefully, at five o'clock in the afternoon, on the 29th of January, 1896; and on the 1st of February was laid to rest in the churchyard at Cantley, where many of his family lie.

“Life’s work well done,  
Life’s race well run,  
Life’s crown well won,  
Now comes rest.”

In attempting to portray the character of those nearest to him, a writer is tempted to abstain from criticism, and to exaggerate traits which are most apparent in the home-circle, but which, in a man’s public life, are perhaps unimportant. This memoir is dealing with a life which, at any rate for its best forty years, was spent in the strong light of public criticism, and in the exercise of abilities for the benefit of those who ever had the fullest liberty to weigh reasons and make protests.

From the age of twenty-three, when he received his first Government appointment in Australia, Mr. Childers had laboured for the benefit of his country. Even when out of office he was still almost continuously employed either as a member of a commission or a committee, a trustee of a national institution, or an auditor of the accounts of a public body.<sup>1</sup> Between the years 1860 and 1886 the number of people who came to him for advice and counsel, for the assistance of his experience or the guidance of his judgment, would hardly be credited. Only those who lived with him have any idea of the unselfish

<sup>1</sup> As, for instance, the Royal Albert Hall.

manner in which he gave up his time and attention to help others.

Mr. Childers had not served an apprenticeship to business or a profession, nor, indeed, to public life, in the sense in which a young or intending member of Parliament can be said to do so by attaching himself as secretary to a Minister, and modelling himself on his chief. It was never from being manager of a company that he had become its chairman ; nor from having held the Queen's commission that he obtained any of the knowledge which helped him to preside at the Admiralty or in Pall Mall. Contrary to practice, amounting almost to prescription, he was Home Secretary without ever having been called to the Bar.<sup>1+</sup>

And it would be idle to deny that the lack of some such preparation was a great drawback to his own comfort and ease. He, it is true, never experienced any difficulty in mastering a subject to which he directed his attention ; he could bring his mind to bear, in an impartial manner, on the *minutiae* of War or Home Office routine, just as in old days on the questions of immigration and customs in Australia. But the continued mental strain eventually exhausted his strength. He was unable to take the rough knocks of public life philosophically. He took up questions with such eagerness, obtaining the fullest information on them, and, having formed his policy, identified himself so earnestly with it, that hostile criticism was galling to him, and the failure of a scheme which he had adopted would be converted into a deep personal disappointment. When engaged on any particular matter he would have its success so much at heart that any check to it would cause an undue amount of despondency and depression.

Mr. Childers died in harness ; he was engaged up to the day he was taken ill on the public service—a fact as typical as any of his whole character and disposition.

<sup>1</sup> He was, however, for a time a student at Lincoln's Inn.

Work for his country, for his family, for his friends was the mainspring of his life. He was restless without it—it acted often as a solace in the midst of the pressure of personal anxiety and sorrow.

He had no special pastime. He was a very fair shot, but in later life he seldom used his gun. He did not care for riding, but was a good walker.

His daughter Milly writes :—

He used to make long expeditions on foot, with one or several of us, generally with some old church or an historical building as an object. On these occasions he was an unusually interesting companion, for he possessed the peculiar gift of imparting to others, in an attractive manner, the information—historical, political, and social—which his retentive memory had stored up.

He was a veritable devourer of books ; in fact, it was often difficult to keep him supplied with both light and serious literature. Modern history he was especially strong in ; his real interest in this began with Henry VII. He used laughingly to say that the Wars of the Roses were too much for him. He enjoyed seeing an amusing play, especially in Paris. He loved France, and would often run across to Calais just to breathe the sea and French air ; and his knowledge of the language made him feel quite at home in that country. He was fond of music, and used to play a little, very charmingly, by ear. Though no artist, he took a great interest in pictures. It seemed to me that, like religious questions and politics, they appealed to him specially from their historical side, and he knew a great deal about the different schools, dates, and styles. The Italian pictures interested him most of all, and he would often visit the smaller cities of Northern Italy, where special masters are seen in such perfection.

The unfailing source of recreation and pleasure which Mr. Childers found in travel has already been noticed, and probably no Minister of the Crown had a more extensive personal knowledge of the Continent of Europe and our Colonies. France and Italy he had known from his early

boyhood<sup>1</sup> ; and he had, at one time or another, visited all the larger towns in those countries. He had twice been to Australia. As chairman of the Great Western Railway of Canada he had constantly crossed the Atlantic ; and during his tenure of the chairmanship of the Royal Mail Company he had made himself acquainted with most of the islands in the West Indies ; while at the Admiralty he had visited many of the ports in the Mediterranean ; and the last expedition he took enabled him to study the Indian Frontier Question on the spot.

Mr. Childers was not an orator ; he was hardly even a fluent debater, but he had that exceedingly useful gift—a retentive memory, and a devotion to detail and fact—which stood him often in good stead. He was essentially an administrator, and seemed at his best in assuming charge of an office where red tape had ruled supreme and organization was needed. His devotion to work was thus testified to by one who served under him, and knew his powers of application well. “Your father,” wrote Lord Brassey,<sup>2</sup> “was one of my kindest and most valued friends ; he injured his health years ago by excessive devotion to the public service. But who can do other than admire his truly noble career ?”

With the practical statesman loyalty to the principles of a party as a whole has a tendency to interfere with independence in regard to detail. An instance of this has been seen in Mr. Childers’s Budget of 1885, where one is confident now in holding that his view was the right one ; but he allowed himself to be overborne ; and, as a result, the Administration, and more especially himself, suffered for it. It was an instance of yielding, from good nature, a point, not of vital principle, but of policy, contrary to his

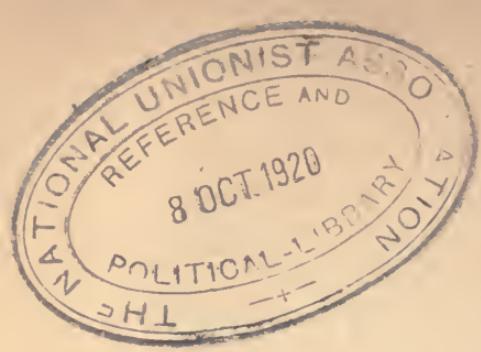
<sup>1</sup> His journeys as a small boy were carefully recorded with *diligence-routes* and maps, time-tables and fares. Among his papers he had preserved two of the earliest copies of “Bradshaw’s Guide.”

<sup>2</sup> To Hugh R. E. Childers, February, 1896.



CANTLEY.

[To face p. 296, Vol. II.]



better judgment. This good-natured—some have called it weak—trait in his character, was akin to his strong quality of self-abnegation, an instance of which is mentioned by one of his colleagues in the following words:—“Nothing I could say,” writes Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, “could exaggerate my sense of his invariable kindness to myself, both publicly and privately. He was always so genial, so thoughtful, so unselfish. Of this last quality, I was witness to one example on his part which I shall never forget—an instance of self-abnegation, on a large scale, such as I doubt if any other public man has shown.<sup>1</sup> But this was his character, and it won him the affectionate esteem of all who knew him.” His sincerity of action was absolute. On no single occasion did he ever act from an indirect motive. And it must be admitted that he was not self-seeking ; it has been seen that he refused the honours that were offered to him, being satisfied with the knowledge that he had given the best he had to the service of his country. His abilities, not being of a showy kind, did not always receive adequate general recognition, but—

— “Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistering foil  
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies ;  
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,  
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;  
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,  
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.”

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<sup>1</sup> It would be unfair to those living to specify the circumstances.



## APPENDIX.

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BEFORE closing these Memoirs, I am compelled to deal with an episode which I would gladly have left unnoticed, had it not appeared incumbent on me to refer to it.

The relations which have long existed in this country between prominent statesmen and the leading representatives of the Press are a matter of common knowledge. The honourable interchange of views and the communication of early information have led to results eminently beneficial not only to newspapers, but also to Governments and to the public; and even Prime Ministers have readily availed themselves of this intercourse to "fly kites," or, in other words, to test the feeling of the country on important legislative questions.

But all such dealings have been based on unwritten but clearly defined rules of implicit confidence, both in regard to the news which is to be divulged, and the mode of divulging it. There is probably no editor of a prominent and respected daily journal who could not bear testimony both to the prevalence of the practice, and the rigid code of honour under which it is carried out.

In these circumstances, it was but natural, if not inevitable, that a member for Edinburgh should be on the most friendly terms with the editor of that journal which has often been called the leading provincial newspaper. Still more was this relationship justified in the case of Mr. Childers, because in the great Home Rule crisis he found that the personal views of Mr. Charles Cooper, the editor of the *Scotsman*, were generally in accord with his own.

We have already seen that Mr. Childers, in his speech at Pontefract, was the first Liberal Leader to advocate a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. The other Liberal

leaders, except Mr. Morley, hung back ; and yet, in the Government which was formed, a Bill was drafted by Mr. Gladstone, in consultation with Mr. Morley, which in its initial state went far beyond the scheme which Mr. Childers had outlined. But he, feeling confident of being able to bring the Bill within the lines he had been the first to advocate, remained in the Cabinet ; and, as has been seen, achieved substantially his purpose.

In this time of difficulty he was in constant communication with Mr. Cooper, and the editor's letters abound in expressions of personal friendship and esteem.

"I cannot tell you how much I value your letters." "I cannot thank you sufficiently for your letters." "I fear you may do yourself political injury by your chivalrous adhesion to Mr. Gladstone." "So far as I can see, you are the only man in the Cabinet, except Morley, whose honour is untouched by the measure." "In all your Cabinet action—as far as I know it—I see nothing but that which I am sure the country will approve, and which personally I greatly admire."

The correspondence also contains such assurances as the following : "I think I may say you will find I never in any circumstances violate such confidences as those shown in your note. They are most useful for my guidance, but I never feel at liberty to use them without full permission."

Yet, within a few months of Mr. Childers's death, Mr. Cooper published a volume of personal reminiscences containing such remarks as the following : "Mr. Childers saw the right and did the wrong pursue." His "special vanity" was "persistently speaking of his influence in the Cabinet as if it were supreme." "A funny feature was . . . that he wrote as if his counsels were most influential in the Cabinet, and yet the Bill was not modified after the first amendments in it. . . . He acquiesced in the amendments ; he did not originate them—at least at Cabinet Council meetings. *In saying this I am but repeating what has been told me by Ministers who were the colleagues of Mr. Childers in the Cabinet.*"

The letters to Mr. Cooper were written in circumstances which could not fail to produce grave dissatisfaction and anxiety in Mr. Childers's mind,<sup>1</sup> and, further, they were penned with a frankness only to be accounted for by the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Vol. II. p. 248.*

absolute and implicit confidence which he obviously reposed in his correspondent, and were intended, as Mr. Cooper himself wrote, purely for his guidance in a difficult situation. Such frankness may possibly be held to have been injudicious, but it is clear that Mr. Cooper exceeded his legitimate rights in basing a portion of his reminiscences upon a correspondence which depended for its openness of utterance and candid statement of political events upon an understanding of private confidence and friendship.

In any case, as Mr. Childers left no recorded comments on his connection with Mr. Cooper, it is clear that Mr. Cooper's statements can never receive an authentic reply. Mr. Childers had passed away a few months before they were published, and he alone could have given a true explanation of all that passed between them.



## INDEX.

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### A

Abdul Rahman, i. 272, 274  
A'Beckett, Mr. Justice, i. 31, 60  
(note)  
Abel, Prof. Frederick (now Sir), ii. 75  
Abercorn, Lord, i. 140  
Aberdeen Ministry, the, i. 63  
—, Lord and Lady, i. 266  
Aboukir Bay, ii. 108, 115  
— Forts, the, ii. 104, 105, 108,  
117, 121  
Aboyne, i. 144, 145  
Abu Klea, ii. 191  
*Active*, H.M.S., i. 172  
Acton, Lord, i. 186  
Adalbert of Prussia, Prince, i. 204  
Adam, Right Hon. William, letter  
from, ii. 45  
Adams, Rev. James W., ii. 276 (note)  
Adelaide, i. 22, 23  
Aden, the fortifications at, ii. 32  
Admiralty, the Board of, i. 161, 195,  
227  
—, responsibility of the First Lord  
of the, ii. 84  
—, the Secretary of the, i. 162  
"Advantages of the Army," the,  
ii. 59  
Advowsons, ii. 271, 272  
Adye, Sir John, i. 271; ii. 37, 72, 89,  
97, 99, 101, 106, 135, 137, 180,  
182; correspondence with, ii. 181,  
187-189, 194, 195, 207  
Afghan affairs, i. 255, 256, 260, 263,  
265, 273  
— frontier, the, ii. 192, 194

Afghan war, the, i. 257; medal for, 280  
Afghanistan, the Ameer of, i. 257,  
261-263  
*Age*, the, i. 68  
Agent-General, an, the duties of, i.  
216, *et seq.*  
*Aigincourt*, H.M.S., i. 170, 177, 179,  
181, 285  
Agnew, William (now Sir), i. 267  
Agra, ii. 279  
Airey, Lord, ii. 34 (note), 35, 58  
Alabama convention, the, i. 173, 206,  
209, 216 (note)  
Albert Victor, H.R.H. Prince, ii.  
281, 282, 286  
Alcester, Lord, i. 170, 283, *et seq.*;  
ii. 86, 88, 93, 169  
*Alexandra*, H.M.S., ii. 87  
Alexandria, i. 285; ii. 87-90, 93, 95,  
99, 105, 107, 110, 113, 115, 116,  
118, 120, 130, 131, 134, 158, 197;  
bombardment of, ii. 90-92, 121  
Alexandrian indemnities, the, ii. 204,  
205, 212, 216, 217  
Ali Musjid, ii. 280, 281  
Alison, Sir Archibald, ii. 92-94, 97,  
110, 112  
Alma, the, ii. 27 (note)  
Alsace, i. 228  
Ambrose, ii. 158  
Ambroz collection, the, i. 200  
Ambukol, ii. 190  
American navy, the, i. 172  
Ambergau Passion Play, the, i. 202  
Anderson, Captain, i. 60 (note)  
—, William (afterwards Sir), i. 112,  
129

Andrassy, Count, i. 201  
*Anglesea*, the, i. 67  
*Ann Miln*, the, i. 26  
 Anstruther, Colonel, ii. 10, 11, 13, 30,  
 32  
 —, Sir Robert, M.P., letter to,  
 ii. 47  
 Anti-Transportation League, the, i.  
 104, 107, 108  
 — petition, i. 101, 103, 104  
 Anti-Turkish agitation, the, i. 242  
 Appeal, the Court of, i. 208, 209, 211  
 Arabi Pasha, ii. 89, 90, 99-101, 103,  
 107, 110, 113, 115, 117, 119-123,  
 126, 128, 131, 133  
 —, trial of, ii. 135, 138  
 Arbuthnot, Colonel, ii. 113  
 —, Sir A. J., i. 262  
*Arena*, the, i. 60 (*note*)  
*Argo*, the, i. 54  
*Argus*, the *Melbourne*, i. 210 (*note*)  
 Argyll, the Duke of, i. 237, 251, 252  
*Ariadne*, H.M.S., i. 180  
 Army Act, 1881, the, ii. 76, 92  
 — and the Queen, the, i. 274, 275  
 — administration, ii. 33, 143  
 — Corps, the First, ii. 77, 96  
 — Discipline and Regulation Act,  
 the, ii. 70  
 —, free-trade in the, ii. 81, 83  
 — Hospital Corps, the, ii. 142  
 — officers and Parliament, i. 282,  
 283  
 — promotion, Mr. Cardwell's  
 scheme of, i. 187  
 — Reserve, the First Class, ii. 96  
 —, shooting of the, ii. 75  
 —, staff of the, ii. 48, 49  
 —, standard height of the, ii. 81-83  
 —, uniform of the, ii. 75, 79  
*Army and Navy Gazette*, the, i. 171  
 Ashburton Treaty, the, i. 215  
 Ashley, Evelyn (afterwards Right  
 Hon.), i. 144, 145, 146, 150  
 —, Wm., ii. 141  
 Assuan, ii. 179, 196  
*Atalanta*, H.M.S., i. 286  
 Auckland, third Lord, i. 110  
 — fourth Lord, i. 242 (*note*)  
 — fifth Lord, i. 5  
*Australasia*, the Bank of, i. 143, 144  
*Australasian*, the, i. 84, 85  
 Australia, arrival of the first steamer  
 in, i. 43  
 —, convicts in, ii. 258  
 —, cricket in, i. 69  
 —, prospects of settlers in, i. 32  
 — and the Suez Canal, ii. 156  
*Australian*, the, i. 44  
 Australian Alps, the, i. 24  
 — bar, i. 39  
 — colonies, ii. 250, 254, *et seq.*  
 — federation, i. 206, 208, 210; ii.  
 254, *et seq.*, 268  
 — League, i. 36  
 — meat, i. 210  
 — newspaper postage, i. 92  
 — railway system, ii. 256  
 Austrians, the, ii. 87  
 Autumn manœuvres, ii. 32  
 Auxiliary Forces, the, ii. 75  
 Ayub Khan, i. 274

## B

Bagot, Captain, i. 24  
 —, Mr., i. 19  
 Baines, F., i. 131  
 Baker, General, ii. 119  
 — Pasha, ii. 178, 203  
 Bala Hussar explosions, the, i. 263  
 Ballarat, disaffection at, i. 62  
 —, discovery of gold at, i. 37, 40, 49  
 Ballater, i. 145  
 Ballogie, i. 145  
 Ballot Act, the, i. 209, 211, 212  
 — in *Melbourne*, the, i. 66, 93  
 Balmoral, i. 145  
 Bamian Pass, the, ii. 194  
 Bankruptcy Bill of 1883, the, ii. 159  
 "Baptism," i. 33  
 Barbour, Sir David, ii. 289  
 Baring, T., M.P., i. 85, 87, 88  
 —, Edward, i. 88  
 —, Sir Evelyn (now Lord Cromer),  
 ii. 176, 177, 178, 208, 210; corre-  
 spondence with, ii. 199-203, 210  
 —, Sir Francis, ii. 209  
 —, the House of, i. 82, 83, 85, 86,  
 87; ii. 208, 209, 210  
 Barkly, Sir Henry, i. 70, 75, 99, 111,  
 260, 261

Barkly, Lady, i. 75  
 Barnby, Mr., i. 203  
 Barne, Colonel, ii. 75  
 Barrère, M., ii. 206, 210  
 Barrington, C. G., i. 140  
*Barrosa*, H.M.S., i. 167  
 Barrow, Mrs., i. 52  
 Barry, Redmond (afterwards Sir R.), i. 47, 207  
 Bartleys, the, i. 84  
 Barttelot, Sir Walter, M.P., ii. 165  
 Basuto war, the, ii. 6, 9, 10, 12  
 Bathurst, A., i. 102  
 —, Col., i. 102  
 Baxter, Rt. Hon. W. E., i. 158  
 "Bay Childers," i. 2 (*note*)  
 Baze, M., i. 16  
 Beach, Rt. Hon. Sir M. Hicks, i. 252, 260; ii. 28 (*note*), 225, 227, 228, 229 (*note*), 253 (*note*)  
 Beach, W. W. B., i. 102  
 Beaconsfield, Lord, i. 252 (*note*), 253, 262; ii. 1, 34, 46 (*note*), 149, 268  
 Beaumont, Godfrey, i. 111  
 —, Miss, i. 111  
 —, Wentworth, i. 111 (*note*)  
 —, Lady Margaret, i. 144  
 Bechuanaland expedition, the, ii. 165, 190  
 Bedwell, i. 1, 2, 5  
 Beer and spirit duties, ii. 220, 222, 224, 225  
 Belem, i. 180, 181  
*Bella*, the, i. 207 (*note*)  
 Bellairs, Colonel, ii. 11, 13  
*Bellerophon*, H.M.S., i. 179, 181  
 Beloochees, the, ii. 283  
 Belvedere, i. 3  
 — Palace, the, i. 200  
 Bemba, ii. 135  
 Benares, ii. 279  
 Bendigo, disaffection at, i. 62  
 Benefices Act, 1898, the, ii. 272  
 Bengal army, the, ii. 278  
 Benson, Dr., Archbishop of Canterbury, ii. 273  
 Benson, Mr., i. 110, 111  
 Bentinck, G. W. P., i. 94  
 Berber, ii. 178, 181, 182, 187  
 Beresford, Lord Charles, i. 164; ii. 241  
 VOL. II.

Berkeley, Henry, i. 96  
 Berkshire regiment, the, ii. 28, 60  
 Berlichingen, Gotz Von, i. 203  
 Berlin, i. 203  
 — Congress, i. 254  
 Bernstorff, Count Andrew, i. 203  
 Berry, Sir Graham, ii. 245, 246  
 Besika Bay, i. 284  
 Beust, Count, i. 200, 201  
 Beyfus, Mr., i. 87  
 Biggarsberg, the, ii. 21  
 Birch, J. W., ii. 225; correspondence with, ii. 161  
 Bisley, Mr., i. 110  
 Bismarck, Comtesse, i. 204  
 —, Prince, i. 204, 246, 287; ii. 210, 212, 214, 215  
 Bisset, Rev. T., i. 251 (*note*)  
 Black, Mr., i. 34, 35  
 Blackbourne, Mrs., i. 109  
*Black Eagle*, H.M.S., i. 144  
 Blacketts, the, i. 111  
 "Black Thursday," i. 36, 37  
 Blackwell, Mr., i. 88  
 Blake, Hon. E., M.P., ii. 289  
 —, Henry Wollaston, i. 99, 100, 110  
 Blanc, Louis, i. 110  
 Blanco, Guzman, i. 264  
 Blenheim collection, the, ii. 163  
 Blignières, M. de, ii. 205  
 Bloemfontein, ii. 6  
 — Sisters, the, ii. 140  
 Blomefield, Rev. S. E., i. 25, 28, 30  
 —, Sir Thomas, i. 38 (*note*)  
 Blomfield, Capt., R.N., i. 170, 285  
 Blum Pasha, ii. 199, 213  
 Bocche di Cattaro, the, ii. 87  
 Boer rising, the, ii. 9, *et seq.*  
 Boers as marksmen, ii. 20, 22, 29, 30  
 —, character of the, ii. 22  
 — stripping the wounded, stories of, ii. 18  
 Bok, Commandant, ii. 26  
 Bolan Pass, the, ii. 282, 285  
 Bologna, i. 7  
 Bombay, ii. 195  
 — army, the, ii. 278  
 — command, the, ii. 45  
 Bonanza mines, the great, i. 249  
 Bond, Col. William Dunn (now Maj.-Gen., C.B.), ii. 25

Bonham-Carter, John, M.P., i. 93  
 Booth, Rt. Hon. G. Sclater, ii. 228  
 Bormio, the baths of, i. 202  
 Borthwick, A. (now Lord Glenesk), i. 145, 146, 150, 214  
 Boshoff, Mr., ii. 7  
 Bounds Park, i. 80  
 Bourke, Mr. (afterwards Lord Conne-  
     mara), ii. 180  
 Bowyer, Sir George, i. 186  
 Boycott, Capt., i. 280  
 Brabourne, Lord, i. 210, 215  
 Brackenbury, Mr., i. 180  
 Braim, Dr., i. 35  
 Brand, Henry, i. 117-120, 156, 282  
     —, President John, ii. 17, 21  
 Brassey, Thomas (now Lord), i. 261 ;  
     ii. 169, 296  
 Brett, Eugene, i. 269  
 Bretton, i. 111  
 Briggs, Lady, i. 167 (*note*)  
     —, John (afterwards Sir), i. 167,  
     196  
 Bright, John (afterwards Rt. Hon.),  
     i. 134, 157, 193, 219, 226, 229,  
     247, 252 ; ii. 153, 206  
 Brisset, i. 246  
*Britannia*, the, i. 175  
 British army, the, ii. 27, 189  
 Broadbent, Sir William, ii. 293  
 Broadhurst, Henry, M.P., ii. 165  
 Broadhursts, i. 84  
 Broadlands, i. 98  
 Brodribb, Mr., i. 116  
 Bromby, Dr., i. 17  
 Bronhorst Spruit, ii. 30  
 Broughton, Delves, i. 230, 248  
 Brown, Capt., i. 170  
 Browne, Mrs., i. 25, 28  
     —, T., i. 25  
     —, Octavius, i. 110  
     —, Sir Samuel, i. 257  
 Brownlow, Major, ii. 16  
 Bruce, H. A. (afterwards Lord Aber-  
     dare), i. 104 (*note*)  
 Bruen, H., i. 102  
 Buchan, D., ii. 265 (*note*)  
 Budd, Mr., i. 33  
 Buddhism, ii. 279  
 Budget of 1885, the, ii. 219, *et seq.*  
 Bulgarian atrocities, the, i. 242

Buller, Gen. Sir Redvers, ii. 29, 182,  
     241  
 Bulwer, Sir Henry (afterwards Lord  
     Dalling), i. 146  
 Burghley, Lord (afterwards Marquess  
     of Exeter), i. 102  
 Burgoyne, Capt., i. 182, 191, 192  
     —, Field-Marshal Sir John, i. 192 ;  
     letter from, i. 194  
 Burke, Mr., ii. 252  
 Burns, John, ii. 238  
 Burrows, Gen., i. 273 ; ii. 49  
 Burton, Frederic (afterwards Sir),  
     ii. 163 ; letter from, 165  
 Butler, Col. W. F., ii. 24 (*note*), 182  
 Butler, Dr. (Master of Trinity), ii.  
     266  
 Butler, Spencer, letter to, i. 183  
 Bythesea, Capt., R. N., V.C. (now  
     Admiral), i. 172

## C

Cabul, i. 262, 263, 272, 273 ; ii. 280  
     —, The Cavagnari mission to,  
     i. 261  
     —, The Russian mission to, i. 255,  
     256  
 Cairns, Lord, i. 146, 147  
 Cairo, ii. 95, 96, 99, 112, 122, 125,  
     126, 128-131, 198, 199, 211  
     —, an English Minister of Finance  
     in, ii. 212-214  
 "Caisse de la Dette," the, ii. 198,  
     217  
 Calcraft, H. G., i. 150  
 Calcutta, ii. 277  
     —, E. R. Johnson, D.D., Bishop  
     of, ii. 277  
*Caledonia*, H.M.S., i. 178, 179  
 California and Consolidated Virginia  
     Mines, the, i. 249  
 Cambridge, H.R.H. The Duke of,  
     ii. 18, 42, 43, 53, 54, 81, 85, 88,  
     95, 132  
     —, correspondence with, ii. 32, 41,  
     42, 51, 88, 91, 127, 144, 145  
     —, memorandum from, ii. 93  
 Campbell, Mr., i. 39, 78  
     —, Lord, i. 110

Campbell, Sir Colin, i. 84 (*note*)  
 —, Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederick, ii.  
 117  
 Campbell-Bannerman, H. (now Rt. Hon. Sir), i. 245, 271; ii. 166, 168, 190 (*note*), 237 (*note*), 297  
 Camperdown, Lord, i. 175  
 Camp Prospect: *see* Mount Prospect  
 Canada, the Government of, ii. 250, 251  
 —, the G.-W. Railway of, i. 243, 246  
 — and the United States, ii. 263  
 Canadian Creek, Ballarat, discovery of gold at, i. 49  
 Candler, C., i. 75 (*note*)  
 Canning, George, ii. 49  
 Canteens, ii. 42  
 Cantley, i. 5, 242; ii. 292, 293  
 Cape burghers, the, ii. 6, 7  
 —, Colonists, the, ii. 4, 8  
 — Town, ii. 3, 5  
 Capel, Monsignor, i. 187  
 —, James, i. 81, 82  
 Captain, H.M.S., 91, 174, 178, 181, 189-196, 204  
 Caracas, i. 264  
 Cardwell, Rt. Hon. Edward (afterwards Viscount), i. 97, 107, 187, 220, 259, 271; ii. 33, 35, 48, 52, 59, 157  
 Carey, Mr., i. 139  
 Carlingford, Lord, ii. 172  
 Carlisle, Lord, i. 97  
 —, Dr. Harvey Goodwin, Bishop of, ii. 274  
 Carlyle, Mr. and Mrs., i. 110  
 Carmichael, Sir James, ii. 200, 213  
 Carnac, ii. 292  
 Carnarvon, Lord, i. 144, 214, 232, 234, 241, 261; ii. 2  
 —, letter from, i. 88  
 —, resignation of, i. 250, 252 (*note*)  
 Carnegie, Hon. C., i. 102  
 Carr, Rev. Thomas, ii. 270 (*note*)  
 — House, i. 2  
 Carr Gomm, F. C., i. 9 (*note*)  
 Carrington, Col., ii. 285  
 —, Lord and Lady, ii. 260  
 Carson, i. 250  
 Carter, Mr., i. 119

Cassell, Mr., i. 54  
 Catholic University, a, i. 279  
 Cavagnari, Major, i. 261, 263  
 Cavaignac, General, i. 16  
 "Cave of Adullam," the, i. 134  
 Cawnpore, ii. 279  
 Cayenne, ii. 258  
 Cecil, Lord and Lady Robert, i. 111  
 Chadwick, Mr., i. 131  
 Chaman, ii. 284  
 Chamberlain, Right Hon. Joseph, i. 247; ii. 154, 159, 180, 192, 233, 237 (*note*), 241, 252  
 —, Sir Neville, ii. 46  
 Champion, H. H., ii. 238  
 Channel Fleet, the, ii. 88, 89  
 — Tunnel, the, ii. 78, 80  
 Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry, M.P., ii. 228  
 Charlemont, the Earl of, ii. 252  
 Charles Edward the Pretender, i. 3 (*note*)  
 Charlottetown, i. 233, 234  
 Chatham Dockyard, i. 168  
 Cheam School, i. 7, 100, 101, 110, 115, 124, 144; ii. 274  
 Chelmsford, first Lord, i. 146  
 —, second Lord, i. 259; ii. 3  
 Chelsea Hospital, i. 124  
 Cherbourg, naval review at, i. 125  
 Cherif party, the, ii. 87  
 Chermside, Major, ii. 182, 183, 187  
 Chesney, Sir George, ii. 278  
 Chief Baron, the jurisdiction of the, ii. 171 (*note*)  
 Childers, C. W., i. 2  
 —, Charles, i. 186, 204, 233  
 — Col. of Cantley, i. 1; ii. 48 (*note*)  
 —, Francis, i. 248; ii. 78, 239, 241, 281; death of, ii. 266  
 —, Hugh, i. 1, 2 (*note*)  
 —, Rt. Hon. Hugh, ancestry of, i. 1, *et seq.*; travels abroad, 5, *et seq.*, 15, 199; school-days of, 7, *et seq.*; college career of, 12, *et seq.*; illness of, 17, 198; ii. 292; marriage of, i. 20; candidate for the office of inspector of schools, 26-29; gazetted to the inspectorship, 32; birth of first child to, 35; offices of, under the Crown, 40; appointed

national commissioner of education, 42; auditor-general, 44; vice-chancellor of Melbourne University, 47, 53; collector of customs, 54; commissioner of trades and customs, 65; his election for Portland, 70-72; agent for Victoria, 79, 98, 112; returns to England, 80; goes back to Melbourne, 83; again returns to England, 87; enters political life, 87; elected for Pontefract, 90; visits America, 90, 227, 243, 248; death of his mother, 96; his business in the city, 98, 115, 143, 144, 226; a member of the Royal Commission on Transportation, 104, 105; on the board of the London and County Bank, 111, 115; Junior Lord of Admiralty, 117; severs his connection with the London and County Bank, 121; at the Treasury, 125-127, 140; leaves the Treasury, 142; director of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, 144; on the commission for the reform of the Courts of law, 146, 147; First Lord of the Admiralty, 157, 160; organizes changes at the Admiralty, 161, 162; resigns his office, 196; returns to public life, 205; re-enters the Cabinet, 212; resigns, 219; chairman of the Royal Mail Co., 299; of the Great Western Railway of Canada, 230; visits Prince Edward Island, 232; his naval promotion and retirement scheme, 182, 183, 184; visits Italy, 185; marries Mrs. Elliot, 258; resigns chairmanship of Great Western Railway of Canada, 261; at the War Office, 271; visits Ireland, 278; minister in attendance at Balmoral, 280; his connection with Army reform, ii. 33, *et seq.*; letter to the Queen upon his Army policy, 39; address to his constituents at Pontefract, 55; speech on the Army Estimates, 73; his memo. on the responsibility of the Secretary of State, 52; offered the

Grand Cross of the Bath, 137, 228, 229; his tenure of the War Office, 143; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 146; his first budget, 150; presides at the Newspaper Press Fund dinner, 158; at the dinner of the London Chamber of Commerce, 159; his budget of 1884, 159; memo. on the proposed evacuation of the Soudan, 193; his budget of 1885, 219-222; his connection with the policy of Home Rule, 230-253; loses his seat at Pontefract, 235; returned for South Edinburgh, 237, 265; Home Secretary, 237; modifications of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule scheme, 248, 249; his interest in Australia, 254; close of his official career, 265, *et seq.*; religious and ecclesiastical views, 274; visits India, 276; his interest in naval and military chaplains, 276; goes to the south of France, 217; retires from political life, 288; chairman of the Irish Financial Relations Commission, 289; character, 292; his travels, 295.

Childers, Rt. Hon. Hugh, correspondence with—  
 T. Baring, M.P., i. 85  
 Messrs. Baring, i. 86, 87  
 Lord C. Beresford, i. 164, 165  
 H. Brand, i. 120, 156, 282  
 H. A. Bruce, M.P., i. 104  
 Lord Cairns, i. 147  
 Lord Carnarvon, i. 88 (*note*)  
 Sir A. Clarke, i. 226, *et seq.*, 234, 236, 241, *et seq.*, 255, *et seq.*; ii. 36, 154  
 A. D. Baillie-Cochrane, i. 158, 159  
 Sir George Colley, ii. 6, *et seq.*  
 Henry J. Colley, i. 121  
 Dean of Cork, i. 150, 152, 153  
 Lord Cranworth, i. 149  
 Benjamin Disraeli, i. 141  
 Sir C. Gavan Duffy, i. 119, 206, 207-212  
 Sir Culling Eardley, i. 96, 97  
 E. G. Fitzgibbon, i. 105  
 Hon. J. G. Francis, i. 215

Childers, Rt. Hon. Hugh, correspondence with—*continued*—  
 Sir Bartle Frere, ii. 2-6  
 W. E. Gladstone, i. 4 (*note*), 125, 131-134, 280-282; ii. 50, 92, 132, 138, 139, 146, 166-168, 170, 184, 198, 204, 213, 220, 229, 335  
 W. Haines, i. 113  
 Viscount Halifax, i. 157; ii. 89, 178, 179, 191, 195, 227  
 Lord Hatherley, i. 147  
 G. A. Hamilton, i. 139, 141  
 C. J. Latrobe, i. 95  
 Mr. MacGowan, i. 132  
 Lachlan Mackinnon, i. 130  
 Lord Northbrook, ii. 182, 183, 210, 212  
 John O'Shanassy, i. 112, 211  
 Lord C. Paget, i. 138, 157, 158  
 Sir Henry Ponsonby, i. 273, 274, 276, 277; ii. 42, 97, 104, 123, *et seq.*, 133, 138-142, 163  
 H.M. The Queen, i. 176, 177, 189 (*note*), 193, 194, 274, *et seq.*; ii. 38, *et seq.*, 66, 94, 96, 97, 99, 266  
 Lord Ripon, i. 274; ii. 36  
 Lord Roberts, ii. 53, 54, 68, 77, *et seq.*  
 Earl Russell, i. 171-173  
 James Service, i. 106; ii. 255  
 Sir Beauchamp Seymour, i. 283, *et seq.*; ii. 86, 88  
 John Talbot, i. 137  
 Sir G. Verdon, i. 213, 214  
 Sir G. Wolseley, ii. 99, 104, *et seq.*  
 His Mother, i. 8, 13, 28, 36, 37, 39, 41-44, 47, 49, 52-56, 58-60, 63, 66-75, 79, 84  
 Miss Louise Childers, i. 26, 40, 42; ii. 191  
 Mrs. Walbanke Childers, i. 19 (*note*), 23  
 John Walbanke Childers, i. 91  
 His Wife (Emily), i. 33, 51, 90, 170, 178, 185, 220  
 Childers, Leonard, i. 2  
 —, Leonard G. E., i. 49, 91, 98, 181, 182, 192, *et seq.*  
 —, Col. Michael, C.B., i. 2  
 —, Miss Louise (afterwards Mrs. S. Simeon), i. 237, 243, 248, 264; ii. 191, 226 (*note*), 292  
 Childers, Miss M., ii. 252, 292, 295  
 —, Mrs., i. 4  
 —, Mrs. Eardley, i. 5, 61; correspondence with, 58, 61; death of, 96  
 —, Mrs. Hugh (Emily), i. 18, 20, 26, 35, 39, 52, 54, 58, 61, 66, 68, 70, 71, 74, 75, 79, 82, 83, 84, 86, 89, 91, 98, 115, 117, 119, 150, 193, 199, 204, 231, 233; death of, 235; ii. 292  
 —, Mrs. Hugh (Katharine), i. 22, 120 (*note*), 258, 259, 264, 265, 270; ii. 126, 162, 277, 281; death of, ii. 292  
 —, Spencer, i. 263, 273; ordered to South Africa, ii. 292; correspondence with, i. 269, 271-273; ii. 26, 190, 277  
 —, John Walbanke, M.P., i. 5, 13, 19, 41, 61, 88, 91, 96, 156 (*note*), 242; ii. 238  
 —, Mrs. Walbanke, i. 5, 19 (*note*)  
 — family, the, devotion of to the Stuarts, i. 1, 2  
 China, progress of, ii. 71  
 Chinese, immigration of, to Australia, i. 62  
 Choiseul Slamville, the Countess of, i. 199 (*note*)  
 Church Bill, the, i. 60  
 — conference, a, i. 38  
 — Congress, the, ii. 270, 271  
 — House, the, ii. 273, 274  
 — patronage, ii. 275, 276  
 — property, ii. 270-273  
 — rates, debate on, i. 92  
 — revenues, ii. 270-272  
 Churchill, Lord Alfred, i. 92  
 — Lord Randolph, ii. 47, 162, 207, 209, 210, 225, 227-229, 253 (*note*)  
*Chusan*, the s.s., i. 43  
 “Claimant,” the Tichborne, i. 207  
 Clanricarde, Lady, i. 111  
 Clarendon, the Earl of, i. 158 (*note*), 173, 186 (*note*)  
 Clarke, Captain (afterwards General Sir A.), i. 63-65, 72, 85, 131, 144,

145, 150, 237 (*note*) ; ii. 36, 87, 156 (*note*), 176, 182; correspondence with, i. 226, *et seq.*, 234, 236, 241, *et seq.*, 255, *et seq.* ; ii. 36, 154 "Clarke's Scripture Promises," i. 270 Claughton, Piers Calverley, D.D., i. 13 Clayton, Miss, i. 109 Clergy, relief of poor, ii. 273, 274 Clerical Subscription Act, the, ii. 275 Clifford, Bishop, i. 186 —, General, ii. 5 Clonfert, the Bishop of, i. 211 (*note*) Clunes, discovery of gold at, i. 37 Coal Commission, the, i. 241 Cochrane, A. D. R. Baillie (afterwards Lord Lamington), i. 158 Colac, i. 34 Cole, Hon. J. L., i. 140 Coleridge, Sir John, i. 90 —, Lord, ii. 137 (*note*), 171 Coles, Captain Cowper, i. 189-194 Colley, Henry J., i. 121 —, Major (afterwards Sir George), i. 121 ; ii. 1, 6, *et seq.* ; death of, 25 ; literary powers of, 27 ; Sir Wm. Butler's Life of, 24 (*note*) Collings, Jesse, ii. 237 Collingwood, near Melbourne, i. 41 Colomb's flashing system, ii. 170 Colonels in the army, i. 275, 276 ; ii. 37, 44 Colonial agents, the, i. 216, 217 ; ii. 257 — defence, the Royal Commission on, ii. 3, 5, 167 — federation, i. 206, 208, 210 ; ii. 254 — governor, a, the status of, i. 77 ; ii. 261-263 — Institute, the, ii. 257 — Office, the, i. 63, 209, 211, 216 Colvile, Sir James, i. 186 —, Lady, i. 186, 187 Colvin, Sir Auckland, ii. 133 Commander-in-Chief, the office of, ii. 56, 261, 262 Commerce, tribunals of, i. 148 Commerell, Admiral, ii. 86 Commons, the House of, in 1860, i. 91 — cricket match, House of, i. 101 Commonwealth Act, 1900, the, ii. 254 Comptroller and Auditor-General, the, i. 129 Comstock Lode, the, i. 250 Connaught, H.R.H. Duchess of, ii. 138 —, H.R.H. Duke of, ii. 97, 126, 136, 138, 283 Consort, H.R.H. Prince, address on death of, i. 109 Constantinople, the Russian advance on, i. 253 Constitution Act : *see* Victoria C.A. Continent, anti-British crazes of the, ii. 189 Conway, Field - Marshal Henry Seymour, ii. 63 Cooper, Lady, i. 84 —, Sir C., i. 84 —, Daniel (afterwards Sir), i. 78, 111 Corea, Russian possessions in, ii. 71 Cory, Montagu (now Lord Rowton), i. 144, 150 Cotes, C.C., M.P., ii. 256 (*note*) Coupons, the taxation of, ii. 212 Court Circular, the, ii. 173 Courtney, Rt. Hon. L. H., i. 247 Courts of Law, commission for reform of the, i. 146 Cowper, Mr., i. 78 —, Earl, i. 280 ; ii. 92 Cranborne, Lord, i. 84 —, Lord (now third Marquis of Salisbury), i. 137, 144 Cranbrook, Lord (Gathorne Hardy), i. 220, 245, 256 Cranworth, Lady, i. 92, 150 —, Lord, i. 92 (*note*), 149 Crawford, Mr., i. 111, 115 Crédit Foncier Italien, the, i. 115 Creed, Mr., i. 110 Creighton, Rev. Canon (afterwards Bishop of London), ii. 211 Crémieux, J. A., i. 16 Creswick, J., i. 55 Crewe, Col., i. 109 —, the Earl of, i. 109, 233 (*note*) ; ii. 292 — Hall, i. 109 Cricket in Australia, i. 69

Crimean War, the, i. 250, 251 ; ii. 27  
*Crocodile*, the, ii. 13  
 Cropper, J., i. 110  
 Cross, Sir R. (now Viscount), i. 220 ;  
 ii. 228, 229 (*note*), 242, 253 (*note*)  
 Crossley, Frank, M.P., i. 93  
 Crown Estates, the, i. 129  
 —, position of the, ii. 261, 262  
 — Prince, the, i. 205  
 "Crucifixion," Lord Dudley's, ii. 164  
 Cruikshank, George, i. 100  
*Cruiser*, H.M.S., i. 178, 179  
 Cuba, i. 231  
 Cuninghame, Gen. Sir Arthur, ii. 3  
 Currie, B. W., ii. 289  
 Customs and Excise, receipt from, ii.  
 221  
*Custozza*, the, i. 290  
 Cyclone, a, i. 21, 22  
*Cyclops*, the, i. 87  
 Cycesen, Count and Countess, i. 200,  
 201  
 Cyprus, i. 254, 284-288 ; ii. 90, 91,  
 95, 105

D

Dacres, Vice-Admiral Sir Sydney,  
 i. 162, 170, 171, 177, 180, 181 ;  
 letter to, 193  
 Dadur, ii. 282  
*Daily News*, the, ii. 119, 170  
 — *Telegraph*, the, i. 290  
 Daira and Domain, the, ii. 212  
 Dalgety, F. G., i. 87, 116, 235, 236,  
 260  
 Dalley, Mr., ii. 261 (*note*)  
 Dalrymple, Lord and Lady, i. 266  
 Damietta, ii. 130, 131, 134  
 Dardanelles, the, i. 284, 288  
 Darfur, ii. 177  
 Darjeeling, ii. 278  
 Darling, Sir Charles, i. 107, 112  
 Darvall, Mr., i. 52  
 Davie, Col., i. 102  
 Deane, Col., ii. 16  
 Death Duties, the, ii. 220, 225, 226  
 Debbeh, ii. 187, 190  
 De Broglie, Duc, i. 246  
 De Cazes, M., i. 246

Defence Commission, the, i. 260  
 Delagoa Bay, ii. 31  
 Delane, John T., i. 97  
 Delhi, ii. 279  
 Denison, Speaker (afterwards Lord  
 Ossington), i. 83  
 —, W. Beckett, letter from, ii. 160  
 —, Sir W., i. 76, 131.  
 Denman, Hon. George (afterwards  
 Mr. Justice), i. 101  
 Dennis, Mr., i. 34  
 Deptford Dockyard, i. 168, 169  
 Derby, fourteenth Earl of, i. 30, 83  
 (*note*), 144 (*note*), ii. 250  
 —, fifteenth Earl of, i. 136, 149,  
 253, 254 ; ii. 146, 256, 257, 259  
 —, sixteenth Earl of: *see* Stanley,  
 Colonel  
 Derenthal, M., ii. 210  
*Devastation*, H.M.S., i. 163, 174,  
 190, 215  
 Devonshire, Duke of, i. 2 (*note*) ;  
 ii. 223  
 Differential Duties, ii. 263  
 Dilke, Sir Charles, i. 206 ; ii. 133,  
 180, 233  
 Disestablishment, ii. 235  
 — in Ireland, i. 150, *et seq.*  
 Disraeli, Benjamin, i. 101, 143, 146,  
 149, 158, 240 (*note*) ; his surplus,  
 50 ; speech on the Reform Bill,  
 137 ; asks Mr. Childers to continue  
 at the Treasury, 140 ; consults Mr.  
 Childers as to the Lords of the  
 Treasury, 141 ; his appointment of  
 Dr. Magee to the see of Peter-  
 borough, 154 (*note*), 155 (*note*) ;  
 dissolves Parliament, 156 ; resigns,  
 157 ; his Colonial policy, 212 ;  
 speech at Manchester, 209 ; his  
 second administration, 220 ; his  
 majority, 227 ; state of his party,  
 230 ; raised to the peerage, 241 ;  
 his attitude on the Eastern Ques-  
 tion, 243, 262  
 Dissenters, the, i. 264 ; ii. 235  
 Dixon, W. Hepworth, i. 100  
 Dockyards, the, i. 168, 169  
 Döllinger, Dr., i. 200  
 Donaldson, Stuart (afterwards Sir),  
 i. 78

Dongola, ii. 185, 190, 196  
 Doran, Dr., i. 100  
 Doria, Mr., i. 180  
 Dost Mahomed, i. 262  
 Drakensberg Range, the, ii. 20  
 Dresden, i. 203  
 "Dual Note," the, ii. 86  
 Dublin Police, the, ii. 118  
 Du Cane, Sir Edmund, ii. 259; letter from, 47  
 —, Charles (now Sir), i. 102, 144-146  
 —, Mrs., i. 144  
 Duchy of Lancaster, the, i. 213, 218, 219; ii. 276  
 Duckworth, Rev. Canon, i. 145  
 Duff, M. E. Grant (now Right Hon. Sir), i. 266; ii. 180  
 Dufferin, Lord, i. 213, 231; ii. 119, 125, 180, 260; letters from, i. 232, 234  
 Duffy, C. Gavan (afterwards Sir), i. 69, 112, 119, 205, 212, 217  
 Dulcigno, i. 289  
 Dunbar, Sir W., i. 111  
 Duncombe, Hon. Augustus, i. 99 (*note*)  
 —, T., i. 92, 95 (*note*), 96  
 Dunkellin, Lord, i. 138  
 Dunse, i. 145  
 Dunster, ii. 147  
 Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, i. 186  
 Durham, Lord, ii. 250, 251  
 Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir W. Hart-, ii. 229 (*note*)

E

Eardley, Lord, i. 1, 3, 4  
 —, Sir Culling, i. 1, 5, 69, 92, 110, 149 (*note*)  
 Earle, Maj.-Genl. Wm., C.S.I., ii. 97, 185, 186  
 Eastern Question, the, i. 242, 243, 245, 253  
 Ebden, C. H., i. 82, 85, 86, 116  
 Eden, Hon. Ashley, i. 242  
 Edinburgh, i. 145; ii. 237, 248, 252, 265, 267, 288  
 —, H.R.H. the Duke of, i. 167  
 Edmonstone, Admiral, i. 227  
 Edrom, i. 145  
 Education, Boards of, i. 36  
 —, discussions on, i. 209  
 Edwardes, Col. Herbert, i. 96  
 Edwards, Col. J. Bevan (now Sir), ii. 176  
 —, Sir Fleetwood, letter from, ii. 136  
 Egerton, Algernon, i. 227  
 —, Edwin (now Sir), ii. 204  
 Egypt, the crisis in, ii. 85, 87-90, 94-96, 98, 99, 150, 151  
 —, the climate of, ii. 98  
 —, the Expeditionary Force to, ii. 103  
 —, Lower, ii. 130, 131  
 —, Upper, ii. 129; the occupation of, 156, 157  
 Egyptian army, the, ii. 85, 115, 131, 200  
 —, bankruptcy, ii. 180, 197, *et seq.*  
 —, bondholders, ii. 201  
 —, finance, ii. 197-218  
 —, loan, ii. 215-217  
 —, railways, ii. 129  
 —, war, the charge for the, ii. 139  
 Elcho, Lord (now Earl of Wemyss), i. 227; letter from, ii. 51  
 Electoral debate, the, i. 74, 75  
 Ellice, Sir Charles, ii. 39, 40  
 —, E., senr., i. 110  
 —, E., junr., i. 110  
 Elliot, Admiral, i. 227, 259  
 —, Col. Gilbert, i. 258  
 —, Capt., ii. 18  
 —, Mrs.: *see* Childers, Mrs. Hugh (Katharine)  
 Ellis, Robert, i. 236  
 —, Rev. W. C., i. 111  
 Elphinstone, Sir James, i. 174  
 El Teb, ii. 83, 178  
 Emigration Board, the, i. 210  
 — to Australia, i. 29  
 Emu, the, i. 87  
 Enchantress, the, i. 196  
 Endymion, H.M.S., i. 167  
 English Country Bankers' Association, the, ii. 160  
 —, taxpayers, the, ii. 201  
 Enterprise, H.M.S., i. 178, 179, 181

"Entombment," the Borghese, ii. 164  
 Erasmus, Gen., ii. 29  
 Errington, Dr., i. 186  
 Erskine, Admiral, i. 227  
 Essen, i. 204, 205  
 Eton, i. 267  
*Euphrates*, the, ii. 13  
 Eureka Stockade, the, i. 60 (*note*), 62  
*Europa*, the, i. 109  
*European*, the, i. 79  
*Eurydice*, H.M.S., i. 286  
 Eusebius's "Ecclesiastical History," ii. 158  
 Evangelicalism, i. 8  
 Evans, Dr., i. 74, 112  
 —, Sir De Lacy, i. 110  
 Evatts, the, ii. 285  
 Ewart, Col., ii. 134  
 —, W., i. 110  
 Exchequer and Audit Act, the, i. 129  
 Exeter, the Marquess of, i. 155 (*note*)  
 Exhibition, the, i. 217  
 Expediency, the doctrine of, i. 33  
 Eykyn, Roger, M.P., letter to, i. 271

## F

Fair trade, ii. 263  
 — and the Tories, ii. 234  
 — League, the, ii. 238, 240  
 Faithfulls, the, i. 84  
 Famagosta, i. 284, 287  
 Farquharson, Col., i. 74  
 Farrer, Lord, ii. 289  
 Faversham, Lord, i. 99  
 Fawcett, Rt. Hon. Henry, ii. 139  
 Fawkner, J.P., i. 46  
 Federal Council Bill, the, ii. 256  
 Federation, i. 206, 208, 210; ii. 254, *et seq.*  
 Fell, John, i. 243  
 Fellows, Mr. Justice, i. 73  
 Fergusson, Sir James, ii. 36  
 Ferry, M., ii. 207, 212  
 Fetherstone, Dr., i. 208  
 Fevre, M. le, i. 2  
 Fifteenth Hussars, the, ii. 17, 21  
 Fifty-eighth, the, ii. 16, 20, 27  
 Fincati, i. 290

Fishbourne, Capt., i. 90  
 Fisher, Capt. (now Adml. Sir John), ii. 87, 88  
 Fitzgeorge, Capt. George, i. 272  
 Fitzgerald, J. F. Vesey, i. 37 (*note*), 54, 63, 260  
 —, Seymour, i. 230  
 FitzGibbon, E. G., i. 105, 106  
 Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond, i. 247  
 Fitzroy, F. H., i. 110, 122  
 Fitzwilliam, Hon. C., i. 102  
 —, F., i. 156  
 —, G., i. 156  
 Flags of truce, firing on, ii. 22  
 Flogging in the Army, i. 274, 275; ii. 37, 45, 59, 72  
 Floor, Mr., i. 72  
 Florence, i. 7  
 "Flying Childers," i. 2  
 Foljambe, F., i. 102.  
 Foreign policy, Mr. Childers on, i. 252.  
 — navies, strength of, ii. 168  
 Foreshore, the, i. 129, 130  
 Forest Creek, i. 62  
 Forster, Rt. Hon. W. E., i. 221, 241, 247, 253, 260, 266, 268; letter from, 269  
 Fortescue, Rt. Hon. Chichester, i. 286 (*note*)  
 Fort Napier, ii. 14  
 "Forty-one Years in India," Lord Roberts's, ii. 284 (*note*)  
 Foster, J. F. V., i. 37 (*note*), 54, 63, 260  
 Fourth Party, the, ii. 227  
 France, opposition of, to the Egyptian expedition, ii. 66, 67; crime in, 258  
 —, and Egyptian finance, ii. 198, 205, 206, 207, 212, 214, 216  
 Franchise Bill, the, ii. 167, 188, 189, 190  
 Francis, Hon. J. G., i. 206, 215  
 Frankses, the, i. 84  
 Fraser, Col., and Mrs. Keith, i. 203  
 Freake, Mr. (afterwards Sir C.), i. 98  
 Free State: *see* Orange Free State  
 Fremantle, Dr., Dean of Ripon, ii. 274, 275  
 —, Hon. Mrs. William, i. 5

Fremantle, Charles (now K.C.B.), ii. 149  
 French fortifications, i. 228  
 — navy, 229; ii. 72  
 Frere, Sir Bartle, i. 259; ii. 1; correspondence with, 2-6  
 Fresh-water Canal, the, ii. 77  
 Freycinet, M. de, ii. 99  
 Friedrichsal, i. 205

## G

Gage, Lady, i. 3  
 Gaisford, Major, ii. 284  
 —, Thomas, D.D., i. 13  
 Galway, the Bishop of, i. 211 (*note*)  
 — election, the, i. 210 (*note*), 211  
 Garibaldi, i. 119  
 Gathorne-Hardy, Rt. Hon.: *see* Cranbrook, Lord  
 Genoa, i. 6  
 George II., King, i. 3  
 German Emperor, the, i. 203; the title of, ii. 173  
 — staff, the, ii. 49  
 Gibraltar, Foot Guards for, ii. 157  
 —, the Board of Health of, ii. 188  
 Gibson, Rt. Hon. T. Milner, i. 139  
 Gideon, Rowland, i. 3  
 —, Sampson, i. 3, 156 (*note*)  
 —, Sir Sampson (afterwards Lord Eardley), i. 4  
 Gilbert, Bishop, i. 258  
 Gildea, Col., ii. 30  
 Gilford, Lord (now Earl of Clan-william), i. 227  
 Gilpin, Charles, M.P., i. 101  
 Gipps, Sir Reginald R., K.C.B., ii. 114  
 Gladstone, Herbert, ii. 248  
 —, Rt. Hon. William Ewart, i. 83, 115, 149, 209, 221, 252, 266; ii. 113, 119, 125, 126, 127, 132, 134, 137, 146, 147, 149, 154, 169, 170, 185, 186, 195, 211, 222, 223, 228, 237, 257, 268, 275, 276, 287, 288; his Budget speech, i. 95; recommends Mr. Childers as Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, 125; his views on public

Sir, expenditure, 126, 128, and the Reform Bill of 1866, 138, 139; his Reform Bill, 134, 137; his secretaries, 141; his proposals as to the Irish Church, 151, 153, 155 (*note*); becomes Premier, 157; dissolves Parliament, 219, 226, 229; resigns, 220; his views on the Suez Canal, 230 (*note*); his attitude on the Eastern Question, 243, 245, 253; ii. 89; his Midlothian campaign, 265; views on Cardinal Manning, 267; forms a new Government, 268, 269; his Transvaal policy, ii. 1; his defence of the Government during the Soudan campaign, 178; his resolutions on the Bulgarian atrocities, 179, 180; on Egyptian finance, 204, 213-215; defeat of his Government, 225, 227; his attitude to the Home Rule problem, 233; forms a new Government, 237; his Home Rule measure, 248, 249; his retirement, 289; correspondence with, i. 4 (*note*), 131-134, 281; ii. 50, 92, 132, 138, 139, 146, 166, 167, 168, 170, 184, 198, 204, 213, 220, 229, 235  
 Gladstone, Mrs., i. 119, 266  
 —, Miss, i. 266  
 Glenesk, Lord, i. 145, 146, 150, 214  
 Glennies, the, i. 84  
 Glover, Sir John and Lady, i. 248  
 Glyn, G. C., M.P., i. 99, 110, 117  
 Goa Patriarch, the, ii. 277  
 Godley, J. R., i. 114; ii. 44  
 —, Sir F., i. 114 (*note*)  
 Goethals, Most Rev. Paul, S. J., ii. 277  
 Goethe, i. 203  
 Gold, export duty on, i. 62, 63, 68  
 —, light, ii. 160, 161  
 —, the discovery of, i. 37, 41, 43, 48, 49  
 — diggings, i. 40, 55  
 Goldsmid, Mrs. Albert, i. 144  
 Goldsmiths' Company, the, i. 115  
 Gomm, F. C. Carr, i. 9 (*note*)  
 Goodenough, Capt., R.N., i. 204, 205  
 Goodman, Mr., i. 74  
 Goold, Bishop, i. 32  
 Gordon Highlanders, the, ii. 25

Gordon, Col. Charles, i. 269, 278, 279; ii. 36, 83, 176, 177, 178, 181, 182, 183, 185, 190, 200, 207; death of, 191; letters from, i. 269, 270

Gorst, John (now Rt. Hon. Sir), ii. 228

Goschen, Rt. Hon. G. J., i. 175, 214, 221, 245, 247, 250, 252, 288; ii. 159, 162, 163 (*note*), 224, 225, 236

Goulburn, Mr., ii. 149  
—, E. M., D.D., i. 14

Government House, Melbourne, i. 57

Graham, General, ii. 83, 97, 114, 178, 181  
—, Sir James, i. 127, 161

Graham's Brigade, ii. 116

Grant, Hope, ii. 48  
—, Ulysses S., i. 172

Granville, Lord, i. 173, 174, 214, 246, 252, 257, 259, 265, 268, 277; ii. 85, 89, 98, 119, 132, 133, 137, 138, 151, 152, 165, 175, 177, 178, 185, 186, 199, 204, 205, 207, 212, 217, 218, 219, 237 (*note*), 258, 263

Grattan, Mr., ii. 231, 232, 252 (*note*)

Gravosa, i. 2, 90

Gray, Mr., i. 34, 35

*Great Britain*, the, i. 54, 59 (*note*)

“Grecians, the,” ii. 22

Greenwich Hospital, i. 122, 123, 124, 174, 175, 197

Grenfell, Mr., i. 83

Grey, Albert (now Earl), ii. 165, 192  
—, General, i. 183  
—, Earl, i. 19, 23, 99  
— de Wilton, Lord, i. 102  
—, Sir Edward, ii. 210, 211  
—, Sir George, i. 63 (*note*), 89, 104

Grosvenor, Lord (afterwards Duke of Westminster), i. 134  
—, Lord Richard, ii. 46, 235

Guards, the, ii. 97, 123

Guernsey, i. 17

*Guernsey Star*, the, i. 18 (*note*)

Gull, Sir Wm., ii. 147

Gundamuk, the Treaty of, i. 261

H

Haines, W., i. 64, 65, 72, 111, 113

Haines's Cabinet, Mr., i. 58, 66

Halifax, Viscount (formerly Sir Charles Wood), i. 19 (*note*), 99, 117, 118, 119, 237, 239, 259; ii. 35, 149; correspondence with, i. 157; ii. 89, 178, 179, 191, 195, 227; death of, ii. 228

Halsbury, Lord, ii. 229 (*note*), 253 (*note*)

Hamburg, i. 205

Hamilton, Bishop, i. 267

Hamilton, Lord George, i. 252; ii. 196, 229 (*note*), 253 (*note*)  
—, George Alexander, i. 139, 141-143  
—, Sir Robert, ii. 289

Hamley, Sir E. J., ii. 97, 106, 110, 115, 116, 122

Hammiks, the, i. 84

Hammond, Henry, i. 70 (*note*)

Hanbury, Mrs. Culling, i. 3, 5

Hankey, Thomson, correspondence with, ii. 225, 226

Harcourt, the Comte d', i. 220  
—, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. V., i. 247, 252, 271; ii. 237 (*note*), 288

Harding, ii. 12, 14

Hardinge, Sir C., i. 80

Harman, Major-Gen. George (afterwards Sir), ii. 110, 114, 130, 134

Harrar, ii. 200

Harrison, Sir George, ii. 237

Hart, Major, ii. 284

Hartington, Lord, i. 221, 241, 245, 252, 261, 263, 265, 266, 268, 273; ii. 46, 54, 80, 81, 82, 132, 146, 147, 156, 169, 179, 183, 185, 236, 237 (*note*), 252; correspondence with, ii. 185-187  
— Commission, the, i. 165

Hatherley, Lord, i. 147, 208; ii. 28 (*note*)

Havelock, General, i. 84 (*note*)

Hawthorne House, i. 55 (*note*)

Hay, Sir John D., i. 114, 139, 140, 174, 179  
—, Lord John, i. 144, 162; ii. 86, 182

Hayes, Governor, i. 244

Heathcote, Sir W., i. 134

Heavside, Canon and Mrs., i. 145

Heilbronn, i. 203

*Helicon*, H.M.S., i. 284  
 Henderson, Sir Edmund, ii. 238, 241, 242  
 Henty, Stephen, i. 71  
 Henty, Thomas, i. 71 (*note*)  
 Herat, i. 262, 263, 264; ii. 194  
 Herbert, Hon. Auberon, i. 206  
 —— of Lea, Lord, i. 114, 192  
 ——, Sidney, i. 63 (*note*)  
 ——, Hon. Sir Robert, G.C.B., i. 260  
 ——, Gen. Sir Arthur, i. 130  
*Hercules*, H.M.S., i. 163, 179, 180, 181, 182, 192  
 Herschell, Lord, ii. 237  
 Herzegovina, the, ii. 87  
 Hewett, Admiral Sir William, ii. 3  
 Heywood, Eardley, i. 24  
 Hibbert, John, M.P. (now Sir), ii. 224, 225  
 Hickleton, ii. 292  
 Hickman, Lieut. R.H.A., ii. 111  
 Hicks Pasha, ii. 176, 178, 180; his army, ii. 202, 203  
 Higgins, H., i. 110  
 High Church party, the, i. 230  
 Highland officers, ii. 50  
 Hill, Rowland (afterwards Sir), i. 92, 131  
 Hills-Johnes, Maj.-Gen., Sir James, K.C.B., ii. 114  
 Himalayas, the, ii. 282  
 Hinduism, ii. 279  
 Hobday, Mr., ii. 282  
 Hobson's Bay, i. 167  
 Hodgson, K. D., i. 110, 111  
 ——, Sir Robert, i. 233  
 Hoey, J. Cashel, ii. 245, 246, 256, 261  
 Holland, Sir Henry (now Viscount Knutsford), i. 110, 261; correspondence with, ii. 240, 241  
 ——, Lady, i. 110  
 Home army, the, ii. 41  
 Home, Col. Milne, ii. 119  
 Home Office, the, and the police, ii. 242-244  
 —— and the West End riots, ii. 239-241  
 Home Rule, ii. 230-253  
 —— Bill, Mr. Gladstone's, ii. 248-252  
 Home Rulers, the, i. 280; ii. 232  
 Hood, Admiral, ii. 54  
 Hope, Admiral Sir James, i. 183  
 Hopetoun, Lord, ii. 260  
 Hopkins river, i. 35  
 Hornby, Admiral, i. 167, 287  
 " Horse Guards," the, ii. 51, 52  
 Horses in Australia, prices of, i. 31  
 Hoskyns, Sir Anthony, i. 184  
 Hôtel de Ville, the march of revolutionists on, i. 16  
 Hotham, Sir Charles, i. 57, 58, 60, 61, 66, 67, 68  
 ——, Lady, i. 67, 69  
*Hotspr*, H.M.S., i. 163  
 Houghton, Lord, i.: *see* Milnes, R. Monckton  
 Howard, Monsignor, i. 186  
 Hubbard, Rt. Hon. J. G. (afterwards Lord Addington), ii. 162, 224, 225  
 Hudson Bay Co., the, i. 110  
 Hugessen, John, i. 144, 145  
 ——, E. H. K. (afterwards Lord Bra-bourne), i. 210, 215  
 Hughes, Mr., i. 71, 72  
 Hunt, Rt. Hon. G. Ward, i. 72, 134, 139, 140, 141, 146, 220, 221, 227  
 Hunter, W. A., ii. 289 (*note*)  
 Huntly, the Marquess of, i. 192  
 Hurst, S., i. 119  
 Hutton, Mr., i. 92  
 Hyndman, Mr., ii. 238

## I

Iddesleigh, the Earl of: *see* Northcote, Sir Stafford  
 " Identic Declaration," the, ii. 85  
 Imperial, Prince, funeral of, i. 260  
 Income tax, the, i. 239, 240; ii. 220  
*Inconstant*, H.M.S., i. 172, 179, 180  
 India, the armies in, ii. 46, 102, 278  
 ——, the British army in, ii. 69, 78  
 —— and Russian aggression, ii. 193, 194  
 ——, gold currency in, i. 99  
 ——, tour in, ii. 276, *et seq.*  
 India Act, the Government of, ii. 139 (*note*)  
 Indian and Colonial Museum, the, i. 241

Indian cavalry, ii. 103, 112;  
 — frontier, the, ii. 279-285  
 — Government, the, ii. 112  
 — troops, ii. 121, 128, 132  
 Indirect taxes, ii. 220, 221  
 Indus, the army of the, ii. 282  
 Infallibility, the doctrine of, i. 186  
 (note), 200 (note)

*Inflexible*, H.M.S., ii. 87  
 Ingogo action, the, ii. 16, 19, 21, 24,  
 29

Intelligence department, the, ii. 49  
 Inter-Colonial Conference, the, i. 210,  
 212; ii. 245, 255  
 Ireland, state of, ii. 87, 92, 118, 123,  
 125

—, the Land Question in, i. 278  
*Iris*, H.M.S., ii. 87  
 Irish Church, the, i. 148, 150, *et seq.*;  
 ii. 270  
 — Crimes Act, the, ii. 219, 223  
 — Financial Relations Commission,  
 ii. 289-291  
 — Land Act, the, i. 232  
 — land purchase, ii. 205  
 Irving, Henry (now Sir), i. 214  
 Isandhula, ii. 49  
 Isherwood, Mr., i. 171, 172  
 Ismailia, ii. 91, 99, 100, 105-107, 113,  
 117, 122, 123

## J

Jacobabad, ii. 282  
 Jains, the, ii. 279  
*James Baines*, the, i. 66  
*James Gibb*, the, i. 31  
 Japan, the progress of, ii. 71  
*Jeanne d'Arc*, the, i. 284  
 Jeffries, Mr., i. 33  
 Jellalabad, occupation of, i. 257  
 Jenkins, Dr., i. 233 (note)  
 Jeune, F., D.D., i. 13  
 Jeypore, ii. 286; the Maharajah of,  
 286  
 Jhelum, the, ii. 282  
 Johnson, President, i. 171  
 —, Dr., i. 84  
 —, Reverdy, i. 173  
 Jopp, Lieut., ii. 17

Jordan, Col., ii. 60  
 Joubert, Gen., ii. 18, 21, 26  
 Jubilee of 1897, the, ii. 254  
 Judicature Act, the, i. 213  
*Jumna*, the, ii. 86  
 Jumrood Fort, ii. 280, 281

## K

Kandahar, i. 273; ii. 280, 284  
 —, the occupation of, i. 257, 261  
 —, debate on the retention of,  
 ii. 46  
 "Karez" system of water supply, the,  
 ii. 284  
 Kassasin Lock, ii. 110, 114, 116, 122,  
 124  
 Katchi plain, the, ii. 282  
 Keane, Col., i. 145  
 Keate, Dr., i. 266  
 Keble College Library, ii. 158  
 Kennards, the, i. 100  
 Kent, the 1st West, ii. 116  
 Keogh, Mr. Justice, i. 210, 211  
 Key, Rear-Admiral Cooper, i. 170;  
 ii. 117  
 Khaki, ii. 78, 80  
 Khanpur, ii. 286  
 Khartoum, ii. 51, 179, 180, 181, 182,  
 191, 192, 193  
 —, council of war at, ii. 176  
 Khedive, the, i. 285; ii. 86, 105, 129  
 131, 134, 177  
 Khojak Mountains, the, ii. 280  
 — Pass, ii. 283  
 Khyber Pass, the, ii. 280, 281  
 — Rifles, the, ii. 280  
 Kiel Dockyard, i. 204, 205  
 Killa Abdulla, ii. 283  
 Kimberley, Lord, i. 208, 211; ii. 19,  
 23, 25, 28, 30, 31, 237 (note); cor-  
 respondence with, ii. 9, 19  
 King, Locke, M.P., i. 101  
*King William*, the, i. 205  
 Kinglake, A. W., i. 110  
 King's Dragoon Guards, the, ii. 7, 8  
 (note)  
 — Royal Rifles, the, ii. 25  
 Kingscote, Col., i. 102  
 Kingston House, i. 98

Kinnaird, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur, i. 96  
 Kirkstone Pass, i. 145  
 Kitchener, Major (now Maj.-Gen. Lord), ii. 187, 189  
 Knight, T. G., i. 115  
 Knox, Major, i. 140  
 Knutsford, Lord : *see* Holland, Sir Henry  
 Koorum Valley, the, 257  
 Kordofan, ii. 176, 177  
 Korti, ii. 190, 191  
 Kosseir, ii. 130  
 Kossuth, L., i. 101  
 Kruger, Paul, ii. 18, 23, 24, 26  
 Kurrachee, ii. 195

L

Labouchere, Henry, M.P., ii. 172  
 —, H. (afterwards Lord Taunton), i. 63 (*note*), 83 ; ii. 223 (*note*)  
 Ladysmith, ii. 12  
 Lahore, ii. 281  
 Laird Bros., Messrs., i. 190  
 Lamartine, A. M. L. de, i. 15  
 Lambton, Capt. Hon. Hedworth, i. 290  
 Land Leaguers, the, i. 280  
 Lang's Nek, ii. 16 (*note*), 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, 29  
 Langston, Mr., i. 39, 41  
 Lansdowne, Lord and Lady, ii. 277  
 Lanyon, Sir Owen, ii. 11  
 Larnaca, i. 284-287  
 Latrobe, C. J., i. 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 33, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 47 (*note*), 50, 52, 55, 83, 130 ; letter from, 95  
 Lawley, Robert, i. 99  
 Lawrence, Sir John, i. 96  
 Lawson, Wilfrid (now Sir), i. 102  
 Layard, Sir Austen H., i. 284, 288  
 Learmonth, Mr., i. 72  
*Leeds Mercury*, the, ii. 227, 248  
 Leeman, George, i. 99, 100  
 Lefevre, Rt. Hon. G. J. Shaw-, i. 144, 170, 245  
 Le Flot, M., i. 16  
 Leighton, Sir Frederick, ii. 164  
 Leiningen, Prince, i. 175  
 Leinster regiment, the, ii. 62

Lennox, Lord Henry, M.P., i. 141  
 Lesseps, M. de, ii. 106, 120, 129, 130, 151-155  
 Lewis, Sir George Cornwall, i. 128 : ii. 148, 149  
 Leydenberg, ii. 17  
 "Liardet's" hotel, i. 24  
 Liberal party, the, i. 245, 264 ; ii. 252, 288  
 Liberationists, the, ii. 235  
 Licensing Bill, the, i. 229, 230  
 Lichtenstein gardens, the, i. 200  
*Liffey*, H.M.S., i. 167  
 Limasol, i. 284-287  
 Lincoln, President, i. 171  
 Liquidation, the law of, ii. 201, 203, 204, 205, 211, 213, 216  
 Listowel, Lord, i. 98  
 Little Bounds, i. 80  
*Liverpool*, H.M.S., i. 167  
 Liverpool, Lord, i. 141  
 — and London and Globe Insurance Co., i. 111 (*note*)  
 "Localization Scheme," Mr. Cardwell's, ii. 33, *et seq.*  
 —, Col. Stanley's, ii. 34, 35, 37  
 Loch, Sir Henry (afterwards Lord), i. 73 (*note*)  
 Lochiel, i. 146  
 Loftus, Lord Augustus, ii. 259  
 London and County Bank, the, i. 111, 115, 121, 143  
 — and North-Western Railway, the, i. 98, 99, 109  
 — convention, the, ii. 215-218  
 Long, Richard, i. 92  
 Longley, C. T. (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), i. 99  
 Lopes, Sir M., i. 209, 227  
*Lord Warden*, H.M.S., i. 178, 179  
 Lorenzo Marquez, ii. 31  
 Lorraine, i. 228  
 "Lothair," i. 187 (*note*)  
 Lowe, Rt. Hon. R., i. 110, 134, 135, 136, 138, 157 (*note*), 219, 221, 238, 243, 247, 250 ; ii. 149  
 —, Maj.-General Drury, G.C.B., ii. 97, 112, 134  
 Luard, Rev. H. R., D.D., i. 55  
 Lucknow, ii. 279  
 —, siege of, i. 84

Lundi Kotal, ii. 281  
 Lushington, Godfrey (now Sir), ii. 238 ; correspondence with, 242  
 —, Edward, i. 5  
 —, Dr., i. 92  
 Lyall, Sir James and Lady, ii. 279  
 —, Alfred, i. 111  
 Lyndhurst, Lord, ii. 141 (*note*)  
 Lyons, Lord, i. 171, 221 ; ii. 259  
 Lyttelton, Captain (now General), i. 271 ; ii. 277  
 Lytton, Sir Bulwer (afterwards first Lord), i. 136  
 —, Mr. and Mrs., i. 201, 220  
 —, second Lord, i. 237, 257, 262, 273 ; ii. 9

M

McArthur, Captain, i. 198  
 MacArthur, D. G., i. 47 (*note*)  
 MacArthur, General, i. 68, 69, 70  
 Macaulay, T. B. (afterwards Lord), i. 129 ; ii. 223  
 McConnell, Mr., i. 109, 110  
 McCulloch, Sir James, i. 210, 216  
 MacDonald, General, Hon. J. W., i. 275-277  
 MacDonnel, John Cotter, Dean of Cashel, i. 154, 156 (*note*)  
 McDougall, General, ii. 35, 120  
 McGowan, Mr., i. 130, 131, 132  
 MacGregor, Sir Charles, ii. 284  
 Mackinnon, L., i. 47 (*note*), 130  
 McNeill, Sir John, ii. 182  
 Macpherson, Gen. Sir Herbert, ii. 41, 78, 112, 115, 116, 122, 124, 135  
 Madras army, the, ii. 79, 80, 278  
 — command, the, ii. 45, 53  
 Magee, Dr. (afterwards Bishop of Peterborough), i. 100, 150, 154, 156, 247 ; ii. 270  
 Maguire, J. F., i. 134  
 Mahdi, the, ii. 176, 189  
 Mahuta, ii. 110  
 Maison Blanco, i. 6  
 Maiwand, i. 273 ; ii. 60, 280  
 Majuba Hill, ii. 25, 27, 29  
 Malakoff Tower, the, ii. 31  
 Malan, M., i. 6  
 Malcolm, Mr., i. 111  
 Malet, Sir Edward, ii. 107, 109, 110, 131, 134, 135, 175, 176  
 Malmesbury, Lord, i. 58 (*note*)  
 Malta, ii. 105, 109 ; despatch of Indian troops to, i. 253, 255  
 Maltese Fencibles, the, ii. 110, 134  
 Manchester regiment, the 1st, ii. 115  
 Manderstone, i. 145  
 Manifold, Mr., i. 34  
 Manners, Lord John (now Duke of Rutland), i. 92, 138, 140 ; ii. 228, 229 (*note*)  
 Manning, Archbishop (afterwards Cardinal), i. 187 ; ii. 275 ; letter from, i. 270  
 Marabieh, ii. 176  
 Marischal College, i. 145  
 Marlborough gems, the, ii. 163  
 — pictures, the, ii. 163  
 Marow family, the, i. 4  
 "Marri Mountains," the, ii. 282  
 Marriages, hours for solemnizing, ii. 246, 247  
 Marsh, M. H., M.P., i. 135  
 Martin, Charles E., ii. 289  
 —, Sir James, i. 207 ; ii. 259  
 —, W., i. 102  
 Masameh, ii. 110, 113  
 Mason, Mr., i. 110  
 Massey, Mr., i. 149  
 Matilda, Queen, ii. 141 (*note*)  
 Matthews, Henry, Q.C., ii. 253  
 Maxemah, ii. 110, 113  
 May, Sir T. Erskine, i. 283  
 Mayo, Dr., i. 7 ; ii. 274  
 Mediterranean, the despatch of an expeditionary force to, ii. 96  
 Megara, the, i. 206  
 Melbourne, i. 24, 25, 38 ; ii. 260 ; governor's ball at, i. 52  
 —, Lord, ii. 209  
 — Public Library, i. 47 (*note*)  
 — University, i. 45, 46, 47  
 — Punch, the, i. 68, 69  
 Melgund, Lord (now fourth Earl of Minto), i. 263 ; ii. 114  
 Melville, Lord, i. 168  
 —, Mr., i. 110  
 Merawi, ii. 190  
 Merchant Shipping Bill, i. 111  
 Mercy, the prerogative of, ii. 245

Merewether, Mr., i. 52  
 Merivale, H., letter to Mr. W.  
     Childers, i. 61  
 Merv, i. 264  
 Methuen, Col. (now Lord), ii. 98,  
     119, 122  
 Metropolitan Railway, the, i. 115  
 Metz, i. 199, 228  
 Mex lines, the, ii. 115  
 Michie, A. (afterwards Sir), i. 74  
 Midlothian campaign, the, i. 265  
 Militia, the, ii. 75, 88, 113  
 Miller, Mr., i. 90  
 Mills, Capt. (afterwards Sir Charles),  
     ii. 2, 5  
 Milne, Sir Alexander, i. 139, 177,  
     178, 180, 191, 192, 261  
 Milner, Sir Alfred, ii. 197, 216  
 Milner-Gibson, Rt. Hon. T., i. 220  
 Milnes, R. Monckton (afterwards  
     Lord Houghton), i. 89, 98, 99, 109,  
     226, 233  
 Miners' licences, i. 62  
 Mines Regulation Act, the, i. 211  
 Minghette, Madame, i. 201  
 Minotaur, H.M.S., i. 179, 180, 181,  
     235  
 Mint, the, i. 113  
 Minto, third Earl of, i. 258, 259  
     —, Lady, i. 265 (*note*)  
 Mitchell, John, i. 231  
     —, Sir W. F. H., i. 55  
 Mittri, ii. 285  
 Modewarra Forest, i. 34  
 Moguls, the, ii. 279  
 Molesworth, Sir Wm., i. 61, 63 (*note*)  
 Mollison, Mr., i. 33  
 Moltke, Von, ii. 48, 49  
 Molyneux, Rev., i. 99  
 Monarch, H.M.S., i. 174, 178-181,  
     190-192  
 Monck, Lord, M.P., i. 141  
 Moncrieff, Sir Colin Scott, ii. 203  
 Money, Alonzo (afterwards Sir), ii.  
     198, 204  
     —, G. H., i. 110, 111  
 Montague, Major, ii. 15  
 Montefiore, Sir Moses, i. 98  
 Montenegro, the Prince de, i. 290  
 Montgomery, Sir Graham, i. 141,  
     233 (*note*)

Montgomery, Sir Henry, i. 237  
 Mont St. Michel, ii. 292  
 Moomah, Lake, ii. 100  
 Moore, Mr., i. 39, 55  
 Morgan, Hon. G., i. 102  
 Morley, John (now Rt. Hon.), i. 266 ;  
     ii. 165, 237 (*note*).  
     —, Lord, i. 271  
 Mosbourg, M. de, i. 201  
 Mount Alexander, discovery of gold  
     at, i. 37, 43  
     — Prospect, ii. 23, 27  
 Mountain guns, ii. 17  
 Mounted infantry, ii. 20, 30  
 Mouridki, ii. 281  
 Mozambique, ii. 31  
 Mundella, Rt. Hon. A. J., i. 247  
 Munich, i. 7  
 Murphy, Dr. (afterwards Sir Francis),  
     i. 46, 260  
 Murray, Sir C., i. 180  
 Muttra, ii. 279  
 Mysore, the Maharajah of, ii. 45, 47

N

Naas, Lord, i. 138  
 Napier, Sir Charles, ii. 44, 282  
     — of Magdala, Lord, ii. 46, 49, 69  
     —, Sir W., ii. 65  
 Natal, ii. 8 (*note*) to 14, 17, 21  
     — Mounted Police, ii. 12  
 Nation, the, i. 211 (*note*), ii. 245  
     (*note*)  
 National character, change of, ii. 29  
     — Debt, the, ii. 161, 162, 163  
     (*note*), 220  
 Naval administration, i. 168, 174,  
     175, 177  
     — College, the, i. 175  
     — Defence Act, the, i. 164  
     — reforms, i. 162, 163, 182  
     — votes, increase in the, ii. 191  
     — Lords, the, i. 162  
     — power of England, the, i. 163,  
     221  
     — Reserve, the, i. 169  
 Navy, beards in the, i. 175-177  
     —, the Controller of the, i. 161,  
     188, 195

Navy, officers' list of the, i. 182, 197  
 —, insubordination in, i. 288  
 —, efficiency of, ii. 40  
 —, agitation for increase of, ii. 165, 166, 167, 180, 189

Nefiché, ii. 105, 107, 116

New Caledonia, ii. 259

Newcastle, ii. 12, 14, 19, 21, 24

—, Duke of, i. 58 (*note*), 103, 105-109

Newdigate, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Henry, K.C.B., ii. 114

New Orleans, i. 244

New South Wales, the division of, i. 19, 39

—, discovery of gold in, i. 37

—, introduction of responsible government into, i. 76

—, Constitution Bill of, i. 238

—, the Governor of, ii. 259

Nice, i: 5, 6

Nicholson, Sir Charles, i. 51, 53, 83, 260; ii. 261

—, Wm., i. 66

Niel, Col., i. 70

Nightingale, Miss, ii. 140

Nile Expedition, the, ii. 165, 180, *et seq.*

Ninety-fourth Regiment, the, ii. 10, 11, 13, 15, 30

Ninety-second Regiment, the, ii. 17, 21, 27

Ninety-sixth Regiment, ii. 86

Nolan, Capt., i. 211 (*note*)

Non-commissioned officers, the position of, ii. 44, 58, 59, 68, 69, 77

Norman Court, i. 88

Northbrook, Lord, i. 192, 237 (*note*), 257, 283, 289; ii. 73, 93, 101, 105, 119, 124, 165, 168, 169, 180, 185, 186, 207, 208, 209, 211; correspondence with, 182, 183, 210, 212

Northcote, Sir Stafford (afterwards Earl of Iddesleigh), i. 137, 144, 148, 149, 220, 221, 241, 259; ii. 90, 149, 150, 180, 227, 228, 229 (*note*), 253 (*note*); his budget, i. 239, 260

Northumberland, the, i. 20, 23, 28

—, H.M.S., i. 179, 180

Norton, i. 20

VOL. II.

*Nova Scotian*, the, i. 90

Nubar Pasha, ii. 201

Nurses, decoration for: *see* Royal Red Cross

## O

Oaths and Offices Bill, the, i. 143, 144

Ober Stab Amt, the, ii. 48

O'Conor Don, Rt. Hon., ii. 289 (*note*)

Ecumenical Council, the, i. 185, 200 (*note*)

Ogilvie, Dr., i. 13

Ogilvy, Mr., i. 32

Ogle, Mr., i. 111

Old Aberdeen, i. 145

Oliphant, Laurence, i. 146

Ommaney, Col., ii. 280, 281

—, Mrs., i. 85

Orange Free State, the, ii. 6, 11

— assists the Transvaal, ii. 21

— Boers, ii. 29

Origen, ii. 158

Osborne, the, i. 125

O'Shanassy, J. (afterwards Sir), i. 46, 61, 63, 85, 111, 112, 211

Osman Digna, ii. 178

Osprey, the, i. 207 (*note*)

Otway, Arthur (now Rt. Hon. Sir), i. 157, 158; letter to, ii. 35

Overend, W., Q.C., i. 89, 90

Owl, the, i. 145, 146

"Owls," the, i. 144, 145, 146, 150, 158, 159

## P

Pacific, French and German designs in the, ii. 257

Paget, Lord Clarence, i. 138, 157, 158

Pakington, Sir John (afterwards Lord Hampton), i. 83, 90, 139, 143, 169, 192

Pallas, H.M.S., i. 178, 179

Pall Mall Gazette, the, ii. 189, 192, 195

Palmer, Dr., i. 33

—, Mr., i. 74, 146

Palmer, Roundell : *see* Selborne, first Earl of

Palmerston, Lady, i. 95

—, Lord, i. 19 (*note*), 100, 251 ; his Ministry, 83 (*note*) ; ii. 289 ; supremacy of, i. 91 ; his attitude to the United States, 98 ; offers a junior lordship of the Admiralty to Mr. Childers, 117 ; his views as to members of the Government retaining other offices, 120 ; his last Cabinet, 125, 126 ; his death, 251

Paris, the Declaration of, i. 173

— Exhibition, the, i. 254

Parkes, Henry (afterwards Sir), i. 78, 207 (*note*) ; ii. 254, 255 (*note*)

Parliament buildings, Melbourne, i. 73 (*note*), 74

—, dissolution of, i. 265 ; ii. 252

Parliamentary work, the congestion of, ii. 230, 231

Parnell, C. S., ii. 236 ; manifesto of, 234

Pasley, R. E., Colonel, i. 73

Patrizzi, Cardinal, i. 187

Patten, Colonel Wilson, i. 115

Patterdale, i. 145

Paul, Alfred Willis, ii. 278

Pauncefote, Sir Julian (now Lord), ii. 213

Payn, General, ii. 45, 46

Pearson, Prof., i. 260

Pease, Sir Joseph, M.P., ii. 224

Peel, Archibald and Mrs., i. 111

—, Frederick (afterwards Sir), i. 125, 144

—, General, ii. 58, 262

—, Sir Robert (the Prime Minister), i. 228 ; ii. 242 (*note*)

—, Sir Robert (son of the above), ii. 210

Peiwar Kotal, i. 257, 261

Pelham, Right Hon. H., i. 3 ; ii. 162

Pembroke, i. 169

Pengelly, William, i. 12

Peninsular, the s.s., ii. 286

Penjeh, ii. 192, 219

Penrith, i. 145

Pentridge, i. 52

Perry, Bishop, i. 25, 39, 48, 60, 260 ; ii. 275

—, Mrs. i. 28, 60

—, Sir Erskine, i. 237, 241

Peshawur frontier, the, ii. 279, 280, 282

Philadelphia Exhibition, the, i. 244

Phillips, Messrs., i. 111

Phinn, Tom, i. 139

Phœbe, H.M.S., i. 167

Pim, Admiral Bedford, i. 227

Pio Nono, Pope, i. 185, 186

Pishin Valley, the, ii. 279

Pitnacree, i. 145

Pitt, William, ii. 231, 232

Pitt's Government, ii. 126

Playfair, Lyon, i. 247

Plevna, i. 248

Plunkett, F. H., i. 52

Pohlman, Mr., i. 25, 28, 29, 32, 33, 39, 43

—, Mrs., i. 29

Poingdestre, Mr., i. 33

—, Mrs., i. 33, 41

Police, the, ii. 240-244

— superannuation, ii. 267

Political pensions, ii. 268, 269

Pollock, Sir Frederick, ii. 170, 171

—, Mr. and Mrs., i. 110

Pondoland, ii. 10, 12

Ponsonby, Sir Henry, correspondence with, i. 273, 274, 276, 277 ; ii. 42, 97, 104, 115, *et seq.*, 133, 138-142, 163

Pontefract, i. 88, 89, 119, 156, 212, 227 ; ii. 55, 190, 233, 234, 235

Poole, Major, ii. 16

Poormbeet, Cape, i. 34

Port Philip, i. 19, 23, 24, 25, 29, 39

— Said, i. 285 ; ii. 91, 105, 106, 117, 119, 125, 151

Portugal, H. M. the King of, visits the British Fleet, i. 180

Portuguese troops in Africa, ii. 31

Potchefstrom, ii. 11, 14, 16, 18

Power, Mr., murder of, ii. 190

Powers, conference of the, ii. 205, 213-215

Precedency in Australia, i. 57

Press censor, the first appointment of, ii. 98

Pretoria, ii. 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 23  
 Pretorius, General, ii. 18  
 Previso, i. 289  
 Prideaux, Colonel, ii. 286  
 Primrose, Mr., i. 9  
*Prince Consort*, H.M.S., i. 178, 179  
 Prince Edward Island, i. 232, 234  
 — Pojassky, the, i. 284  
 Probyn, John, i. 122  
 Promotion in the Army, i. 275, 276; ii. 37, *et seq.*  
*Provence*, the, i. 284  
 Provisions in Australia, price of, i. 31, 41, 43, 52  
 Prussia, the Crown Prince of, i. 204  
 —, the King of, i. 204  
*Psyche*, H.M.S., i. 178  
 Public Worship Bill, the, i. 229; ii. 275  
 Puerto Cabello, i. 264  
*Punch*, i. 267, 268  
 Punjab Cavalry, the First, ii. 282  
 Pyramids, the, i. 84

## Q

*Quarterly Review*, the, i. 171  
 Queen, H.M.S., i. 188 (*note*)  
*Queen of the South*, the, i. 57  
 Queenstown, i. 170  
 Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, ii. 141 (*note*)  
 Quetta frontier, the, ii. 279, 280  
 —, Soldiers' Institute at, ii. 285

## R

Rae, Mr., i. 260  
 Raikes, Rt. Hon. Cecil, ii. 228  
 Ramses, ii. 113  
 Raphael's "Madonna degli Ansiedi," ii. 163, 164, 165  
 Rathbone, Mr., i. 100  
 Ravenna, i. 202  
 Rawlinson, Sir Henry, i. 273  
 Rawson, Capt. (now Sir Harry), R.N., ii. 106 (*note*)  
 Raynham, Lord, i. 111

Reay, Lord, i. 265 (*note*); ii. 277; letter to, 49  
 —, Lady, i. 265, 266, 267; ii. 277  
*Récidiviste Bill*, the, ii. 259  
 Redan, the, ii. 27 (*note*)  
 Red Sea ports, the, ii. 200, 202  
*Redistribution Bill*, the, ii. 190, 227 (*note*)  
 Redmond, J. E., M.P., ii. 289 (*note*)  
 Reed, Edward, M.P. (afterwards Sir), i. 190, 227  
 Reform Bill of 1866, i. 134, 137, 138  
 Regiments, changes in the numbering of, ii. 62  
*Re Galantuomo*, the, i. 202  
 Regimental officers, ii. 49  
 — messes, ii. 64, 69, 73  
 Reiner, M., i. 8, 9  
*Reine Blanche*, the, i. 284  
 Rents in Australia, i. 29, 52  
 Reserves, the, warned for service, ii. 192  
 Revenue, the, ii. 166  
 Revised Lectionary Act, the, ii. 275  
 Revolution of 1848, the, i. 15, 16  
 Revolutionary Social Democrats, the, ii. 238, 240  
 Rhodes, i. 289  
 Riaz Pasha, i. 289  
 Rice, Capt., R.N., i. 191  
 Richardson, Mr., i. 34  
 Riot (Damages) Act, 1886, the, ii. 244  
 Riots, West End, ii. 238, 239, 244  
 Ripon, the Dean of, ii. 274  
 —, Lord, i. 214, 269, 270; ii. 37, 69, 176, 192, 237 (*note*); correspondence with, i. 274; ii. 36  
 Ritchie, Rev. Mr., ii. 22  
 Rivat, M., i. 6  
 Roberts, Lady, ii. 77  
 —, General Sir Abraham, ii. 77 (*note*)  
 —, Lady, now Countess, ii. 78, 83, 277, 281  
 —, Sir Frederick (now F.M., Earl, K.G.), i. 257, 263, 264, 272, 273, 274; ii. 143, 277, 278, 281,

282, 285; correspondence with, 53, 54, 68, 77, *et seq.*, 276 (*note*); his views on the Army, 68, 79, *et seq.*  
 Robinson, C., i. 102  
 —, Sir Hercules, ii. 30  
 —, Vice-Admiral Sir Spencer, i. 162, 189, 196, 222, 223  
 Rockingham, Lord, ii. 63 (*note*)  
 Rohri Junction, ii. 286  
 Rollin, Ledru, i. 16  
 Romaine, William G., ii. 87  
 Rome, i. 6  
 —, secessions of Oxford clergy to, i. 13  
 Rose, Sir John, i. 216  
 Rosebery, Lord, ii. 226 (*note*), 237 (*note*)  
 Ross, C., M.P., i. 141  
 Rothschild, Baron, i. 97  
 —, the House of, ii. 208  
 Rousseau, M. Waldeck, ii. 258  
 Royal Mail Co., i. 143  
*Royal Oak*, H.M.S., i. 178, 179  
 Royal Red Cross for nurses, ii. 139-143  
 — Society conversazione, i. 144  
 Rubens, pictures by, ii. 164  
 Rudall, Mr., i. 101  
*Rupert*, H.M.S., i. 163  
 Russell, Lady, i. 120 (*note*), 265 (*note*)  
 —, Lady Emily, i. 186  
 —, Lord John, i. 45 (*note*), 61, 101, 120 (*note*), 239; ii. 289; announces self-government to Victoria, i. 63; his views on public expenditure, 126; succeeds Lord Palmerston, 132; resigns, 138; correspondence with, 171-173  
 —, Lord Odo (afterwards Lord Ampthill), i. 186  
 —, Sir Baker Creed, ii. 112, 134  
 Russia, Nicholas, Emperor of, ii. 194, 195  
 — and the Persian Gulf, i. 262  
 — in the East, ii. 71, 89, 192-195  
 —, the war with, i. 59 (*note*), 63  
 Russian Envoy Question, the, i. 258  
 Rylands, Peter, ii. 156, 165

## S

St. John, Mr., i. 201  
 St. Juan Question, the, i. 174, 214, 215  
 St. Katherine's Foundation, ii. 141, 142  
 St. Kilda, i. 24, *et seq.*  
 St. Louis, i. 250  
 St. Privat, i. 199  
 Sala, G. A., i. 100  
*Salamis*, H.M.S., ii. 108  
 Salisbury, Marquess of, i. 111, 137, 144, 214, 237, 241, 253 (*note*), 258; ii. 228, 229, 235, 236; forms his first administration, 227, 229; his second, 253 (*note*)  
 Salisbury-Schouvaloff memorandum, the, i. 254, 258  
 Salt Lake City, i. 249  
 Salutes for victory, ii. 127  
 Salzburg, i. 201  
 Sandeman, Sir Robert, ii. 280, 284  
 —, Lady, ii. 284, 285  
 San Francisco, i. 249  
 Sanitary Act, the, i. 211  
 Sartorius, Sir G., i. 180, 181; ii. 72  
 Saunders, Capt., ii. 15  
 Savoy Chapel, the, i. 214; ii. 276  
 — Palace, the, i. 213  
 Saye and Sele, Lady, i. 4  
 Schleswig-Holstein, i. 120  
 Scholefield, Mr., i. 117, 118  
 Schonbein, Prof., i. 9  
 School systems in Australia, i. 30  
 Scotland, the Established Church in, ii. 270  
 Scott, Gilbert, i. 205  
 —, Lord and Lady H., i. 144  
 Scottish Education Act, the, i. 211  
 — Patronage Bill, the, i. 229  
 Scudamore, Frank, i. 131, 132  
*Scylla*, H.M.S., i. 167  
 Seaforth Highlanders, the, ii. 115  
 Secretaries of State, the responsibilities of, i. 133, 134; ii. 84, 242-244, 261-263  
 Seely, Charles, M.P., i. 143  
 Selborne, Lady, i. 266, 268

Selborne, first Earl of, i. 146, 219,  
     266; ii. 136, 137  
 —, second Earl of, ii. 136 (*note*)  
 "Selden on Tithes," ii. 273  
 Selkirk, Lord, i. 110  
 Selwyn, Alfred R. C., i. 75  
 —, Bishop, i. 267  
 —, Mrs. A. R. C., i. 75  
 "Separation Day," i. 260  
 "Separation Question," the, i. 29  
 Service, James, i. 106; ii. 156, 255,  
     256, 258  
 Seventy-fifth Regiment, the, ii. 86  
 Seward, W. H., i. 171  
 Sewell, warden of Radley, i. 13  
 Sexton, Thomas, ii. 289 (*note*)  
 Seymour, Capt. Beauchamp, R.N.  
     (afterwards Lord Alcester), i. 170,  
     227, 230, 235, 283; ii. 73, 93, 105,  
     106, 108, 109, 115, 169; letters  
     from, 86, 88  
 Sharon, Senator, i. 249  
 Sheerness, i. 169  
 Shendi, ii. 182  
 Sher Ali, i. 262  
 Sheriffs, the nomination of, ii. 170, 171  
 "Short service" system, the, ii. 33,  
     *et seq.*, 69, 74, 79, 81  
 Shortened Services Act, the, ii. 275  
 Shutargarden Pass, the, i. 263  
 Sibi, ii. 286  
 Silver, the price of, i. 238, 239  
 Simeon, Stephen, ii. 238  
 —, Mrs. Stephen: *see* Childers,  
     Miss Louise  
 Simmons, Sir Lintorn, i. 261; ii. 277  
 Simon's Bay, ii. 2, 3  
 Sinking Fund, the, ii. 150, 221  
 Sixtieth Regiment, the, ii. 17, 20, 21  
 Sladen, C. (afterwards Sir), i. 73  
 Slattery, Hy. F., ii. 289  
 Small, Capt., i. 90  
 Smidt, Field Commandant General,  
     ii. 21  
 Smith, R. Murray, ii. 156, 257  
 —, Rt. Hon. W. H., i. 220; ii.  
     86, 149, 229 (*note*), 253 (*note*)  
 —, Sir Culling, i. 1, 2, 12  
 —, Lady Culling, i. 4, 5  
 —, Robert, i. 32  
 —, Sydney, i. 110 (*note*)

Smith, Tommy, i. 72  
 Smyrna, i. 289  
 Smyth, General, ii. 13  
 Sneyd, Mrs., i. 85  
 Soldiers and sailors in civil work,  
     employment of, i. 241  
 Somers, Lord, ii. 141 (*note*)  
 Somerset, Duke of, i. 119 (*note*), 121,  
     125, 160; ii. 44  
 —, Dowager Duchess of, i. 220  
 — House, i. 188  
 South Africa, ii. 255; Dutch inhabi-  
     tants of, 11; natives of, 4  
 — African Bill, the, i. 247, 248;  
     ii. 230  
 — Australia, i. 19  
 — Yorkshire Regiment, ii. 62  
 Spain, cholera in, ii. 188, 189  
 Spandau, i. 204; ii. 48  
 Speaker, the, i. 206 (*note*)  
 Spencer, Earl, i. 155; ii. 92, 125, 162  
 —, Rt. Hon. C. R., i. 284 (*note*)  
 Spezia dockyard, i. 202  
 Spirits, duty on, ii. 220, 222, 224, 226  
 Sprigg, J. Gordon (now Sir), ii. 6, 7  
 Stanch, Mr., i. 74  
 Standard, the, ii. 123, 248 (*note*)  
 Standerton, ii. 11, 14, 15  
 Stanford, Governor, i. 249  
 Stanhope, Capt., i. 194  
 —, Lord, i. 102  
 —, Hon. Philip, i. 221  
 —, Edward, ii. 253 (*note*)  
 Stanley, Colonel (afterwards six-  
     teenth Earl of Derby), i. 272; ii.  
     34, 35, 229 (*note*), 262  
 —, Lord: *see* Derby, Earl of  
 Stansfeld, J., i. 117, 144, 252  
 Station Peak, i. 24  
 Stawell, William (afterwards Sir), i. 39,  
     47 (*note*), 62, 63, 64, 65, 73  
 Steamer, the first, arrival of in Aus-  
     tralia, i. 43  
 Stephen, Alfred, i. 52  
 —, Carl, the Archduke, i. 290  
 —, Frank, i. 60 (*note*)  
 —, King, ii. 141 (*note*)  
 —, Sir Alfred, i. 52 (*note*), ii. 261  
     (*note*)  
 Stephens, Mr., i. 100  
 Stephenson, Gen., ii. 178, 182, 185, 186

Stewart, Col., murder of, ii. 190  
 —, Sir Herbert, ii. 112, 191  
 —, Gen. Sir Donald, i. 257, 274 ;  
     ii. 69, 78  
 Stokes, Professor (afterwards Sir) G.,  
     ii. 75  
 Stone Pasha, ii. 107  
 Stony river, i. 34  
 Strachey, Sir John, i. 242  
 Strasburg, i. 199, 227  
 Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord, i. 83  
 Strawberry Hill, i. 284  
 Stuart, Alex., ii. 256 (*note*)  
 Sturt, Capt. Charles, i. 83  
 Suahili Arabs, the, ii. 31  
 Suakim, ii. 178, 181, 183, 185, 187,  
     188, 242, 254, 261  
 —, campaign, the, ii. 165  
 ——Berber Railway, the, ii. 184,  
     188, 193  
 —, Berber route, the, ii. 190, 193  
 Sudan, the, ii. 131, 175, *et seq.*, 193,  
     194, 196, 202  
 Suez, ii. 100, 116  
 Suez Canal, the, i. 230, 246, 247 ;  
     ii. 89-91, 94, 108, 117-121, 125,  
     129, 130, 133, 151-156, 212 ; neu-  
     tralization of, 215  
 Sukhar bridge, the, ii. 286  
 Sullivan, Sir Edward, ii. 101  
 —, Admiral Sir F., ii. 3  
 Sultan, the, i. 144 ; ii. 119, 124, 125, 137  
 Sultan, H.M.S., i. 163  
 Sultan Pasha, ii. 131  
 Sumner, Senator, i. 173  
 Superb, H.M.S., ii. 87  
 Supply, setting up, ii. 167  
 Sussex Regiment, the First, ii. 116  
 Sutherland, the Duke of, i. 110  
 —, Sir Thomas, ii. 289  
 Swart Kopje, ii. 30  
 Sweet Water Canal, the, ii. 100, 109  
 Sydney, i. 25, 51, 53 ; ii. 260, 261  
 Symonds, Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas,  
     i. 191

T

Table Bay, ii. 2, 3  
 Tagus, the, the British Fleet enter-  
     ing, i. 180

Tahoe, Lake, i. 249  
 Tait, Dr., Archbishop of Canterbury,  
     i. 155, 230  
 Talbot, John, i. 137  
 Tamai, ii. 83, 178  
 Tamar, the, ii. 13  
 Tankerville, Lady, i. 144  
 Tartan question, the, ii. 49  
 Tasman, the, i. 28  
 Taunton, Lord : *see* Labouchere, H.  
 Taylor, Col., i. 102  
 —, Sir Brook, ii. 49  
 Taylour, Gen. Sir Richard, ii. 130  
 Telegraphs, the purchase of, i. 130,  
     131, 132  
 Telehi, Countess, i. 110  
 Tel-el-Kebir, ii. 90, 107, 108, 111,  
     112, 113, 116, 117, 126, 128  
 Tel-el-Mahsita, ii. 114  
 Telephone, the, i. 280, 281  
 Territorial regiments, ii. 35, 38, 42,  
     43, 44, 45, 59, 61, 62, 63, 143  
 Tette, ii. 31  
 Thanksgiving Day, i. 206  
 Thibet, ii. 278  
 Thiers, Madame, i. 221  
 —, Mons., i. 221, 246  
 Thomson, Edward Deas, i. 52, 99,  
     260, 262 ; letter from, 76  
 Thornton, Sir Edward, G.C.B.,  
     i. 230  
 Thring, Sir Henry (now Lord), i. 148  
 Thunderer, H.M.S., i. 174, 190  
 Tiger, H.M.S., ii. 29  
 Times, the, i. 106, 166, 167, 182,  
     198, 215 ; ii. 77, 79, 118, 119, 120,  
     163, 170, 173, 174  
 Timsah, Lake, ii. 106  
 Todd, Mr., i. 131  
 "Todd's Students' Guide," i. 13  
 Token coinage, ii. 160, 161  
 Toorak, i. 70, 74, 75  
 Toorak House, i. 57 (*note*)  
 Topaze, H.M.S., i. 142  
 Tories, the, ii. 195, 196, 225, 227, 234,  
     236  
 Train, George Francis, i. 100  
 Transkei territories, the, ii. 9  
 Transport, the, ii. 94, 95, 109, 118,  
     124  
 Transportation, i. 41, 50, 104, 105

Transvaal affairs, ii. 6  
 — armistice, the, ii. 26, 53  
 —, annexation of the, ii. 1, 23  
 — Boers, the, ii. 12  
 — garrison, the, ii. 7, 8  
 —, rising in the, ii. 10  
 —, bill for the annexation of, i. 247  
 — war of 1899-1901, ii. 254  
 Treasury, the, i. 125-127, 133, 141, 142  
 —, business of the, ii. 148, 149

Trent affair, the, i. 109 (*note*)  
 Trevelyan, George (now Right. Hon. Sir), i. 162, 189, 275, 277 ; ii. 56, 125, 190, 222, 223, 241

Trollope, Mr., i. 33

*Truth*, ii. 172

Tryon, Admiral Sir George, i. 164

Tuam, Archbishop of, i. 211 (*note*)

Tunis, losses of the French in, ii. 103

Turco-Montenegrin Question, the, i. 289

Turk, the, the future of, i. 288

Turkey, the Sultan of, i. 284

— and the Egyptian crisis, ii. 113, 115, 118, 119, 124, 130, 137

— and the War Loan, ii. 199

Tweeddale, Lord and Lady, ii. 266

Tyler, John Chatfield, i. 85, 111

## U

*Undaunted*, H.M.S., i. 164

United States, the, i. 98 ; ii. 263, 264

University boat race, the, i. 101

Utrecht, ii. 17

## V

Vancouver Island, i. 215

Van Diemen's Land, i. 19

Vandyke's "Charles I.," ii. 164, 165

Venables, G. S., i. 110

Venice, i. 201

Verdon G. Sir, i. 60 (*note*), 206, 213, 260

Verney, Sir Harry, M.P., letter from, ii. 48 (and *note*)

Verona, i. 7

Veto, the power of, the, i. 238  
 Victoria, H.M. Queen, i. 266, 273-278, 280 ; ii. 25, 42, 43, 51 (*note*), 56, 126, 132, 133, 136, 138, 140-142, 163, 269 ; message from, to her troops in the Transvaal, 16 ; her solicitude for the Army, 103, 104, 123 ; letters from, i. 176, 177, 189 (*note*), 193, 194, 274 *et seq.* ; ii. 38 *et seq.* 66, 94, 96, 97, 99, 266

*Victoria*, the, i. 290

Victoria Emigrants' Assistance Society, i. 116

—, the Colony of, i. 208 ; formation of, 19, 26 ; inauguration of the new government in, 39, 63 ; the agency for, 79, 81, 98, 112, 205, 212 ; the defences of, 113 ; governor of, ii. 259

Victorian ballot, the, i. 212

— Constitution Act, the, i. 55, 56, 59, 61, 64, 238

Vincent, Sir Edgar, ii. 199, 200, 201, 203, 204

Virginia City, i. 249

Vivian, Hussey, and Mrs., i. 248

Vladivostock, ii. 71

Vokes family, the, i. 214

*Volage*, H.M.S., i. 172, 191

Volunteer force of Melbourne, i. 60 (*note*), 115

Volunteers, the, ii. 50, 64, 69, 76

## W

Waddington, Mons., i. 221, 246, 247, 254 ; ii. 205-207, 215

Wady Halfa, ii. 182, 185, 189, 190, 196

Wages in Australia, i. 31

Wakkerstrom, ii. 14, 15, 17

Waldegrave, Lady, i. 119, 260, 284 (*note*)

Waldegrave-Leslie, Hon. George, i. 83

Wales, H.R.H. the Prince of, i. 217, 254

Walker, General Sir Beauchamp, K.C.M.G., i. 204

Walker, Charles, i. 119 (*note*)  
 —, J., i. 102  
 —, Rev. R., i. 14  
 —, Rev. George Edmund, i. 18,  
   237 (*note*)  
 Walpole, Horace, i. 3 (*note*), 284  
   (*note*)  
 Walter, John, i. 102  
 War, the Secretary for, the functions  
   of, ii. 56, 57  
 —, Mr. Gladstone as Secretary for,  
   ii. 127  
 — correspondents, ii. 98  
 — Office, the, i. 241, 268, 269, 271 ;  
   ii. 88  
 Warburton, Colonel, ii. 280  
 Ward, Crosbie, i. 112  
 Warrant, a Royal, ii. 66  
 — officers, ii. 44, 59  
 Warren, Sir Charles, ii. 165, 242  
 Warrior, H.M.S., i. 180  
 Washington, the Treaty of, i. 174,  
   210, 211, 216 (*note*)  
 Waste Land Commission, the, i. 279  
 Webber, Captain, R.N., i. 84  
 Welby, Sir R. (now Lord), i. 125  
   (*note*) ; ii. 147, 148, 213, 289  
 Wellington, the Duke of, i. 240 ; ii.  
   57, 58  
 Wells, Mr., ii. 155  
 Wenlock, Lord, i. 99  
 Were, Mrs., i. 55, 75  
 —, J. B., i. 24, 25 (*note*), 42, 75  
 West Indies, the, i. 264 ; ii. 263  
 Western Australia, i. 19, 105, 107,  
   108  
 Western Port, i. 75  
 Westgarth, Mr., i. 106  
 West Riding, the, i. 95  
 Wharncliffe, Lord, i. 144-146 ; ii.  
   87  
 Whateley, Richard, D.D., ii. 258  
 Whewell, William, D.D., i. 14  
 Whitbread, M.P., Samuel, i. 221  
 White, M.P., Colonel, i. 141  
 —, Dr. Edward, ii. 275  
 —, Sir George and Lady, ii. 285  
 —, Rev. Henry, i. 214  
 —, Mr., ii. 13  
 Wilhelmshafen dockyard, i. 204, 205  
 Wilkinson, W. M., i. 117, 118  
 Willes, Captain (afterwards Admiral  
   Sir George), i. 170 ; ii. 70  
 William IV., Journal of H.M., i. 188  
   (*note*)  
 Williams, Mrs. Edward Eyre, i. 25  
 —, Carvell, ii. 247  
 —, Sir Hartley, i. 25  
 —, Sir E., i. 260  
 Willis, General, ii. 97, 111, 122  
 Wilmot, Sir John Eardley, i. 3, 4  
 Wilowski, M., i. 110  
 Wilson, Mr. (afterwards Sir) C.  
   Rivers, i. 140 ; ii. 149, 152, 201,  
   213  
 —, Sir Charles, ii. 119, 125, 191  
 —, Edward, i. 210, 251  
 —, Sir Samuel, i. 260  
 Wiltshire, Mr., i. 78  
 Winn, Hon. Rowland (now Lord St.  
   Oswald), ii. 235 (*note*)  
 Wiseman, Cardinal, i. 97, 202  
 Wolff, Sir Henry D., i. 144-146 ; ii.  
   228  
 —, G. W., M.P., ii. 289 (*note*)  
 Wolseley, Lady, ii. 105, 126, 292  
 —, Gen. Sir Garnet (afterwards F.-  
   M. Viscount), ii. 1-5, 16, 35, 82,  
   89, 121, 137, 138, 176, 187, 188,  
   191, 207, 292 ; appointed Q.-M.  
   General, 37 ; his Canadian ex-  
   pedition, 49 ; appointed Adj.-Gen.,  
   53, 54 ; his plan of Egyptian cam-  
   paign, 90, 91, 97, 98, 99, 105 ; is  
   chairman of a commission on  
   officers' expenses, 73 ; correspon-  
   dence with, 99-104 ; raised to the  
   peerage, 132 ; his plans for the  
   relief of Gordon, 181 ; in command  
   of the expedition, 185, 186, 187 ;  
   arrives at Wady Halfa, 189  
 Wolverton, the first and second  
   Lords, i. 99 (*note*)  
 Wood : *see* Halifax, Viscount  
 —, Sir Evelyn, ii. 4, 17, 21, 24, 25,  
   26-31, 97, 110, 115, 116, 122, 178 ;  
   his army in Egypt, 202  
 —, Hon. John Denistoun, i. 260  
 —, Lady Mary, i. 19  
 Woods and Forests, department of,  
   i. 129  
 Wool trade, the, i. 38

Woolwich dockyard, i. 168, 169  
 — fuses, ii. 108  
 Worcestershire Regiment, the, ii. 285  
 Wortley, Stuart, i. 145, 146, 150  
 Wray, General, ii. 130  
*Wy*, the, i. 84  
 Wyndham, Hon. P., i. 102

## Y

Yakub Khan, i. 261, 262, 263, 272  
 Varra, the, i. 26  
 Velverton, Sir Hastings, i. 191  
 Yeomanry, the, ii. 61, 88  
 York, C. T. Longley, Archbishop of,  
 i. 99

York, Hon. A. Duncombe, Dean of,  
 i. 99  
 Yosemite Valley, the, i. 249  
 Youl, Mr., i. 260  
 Young, Captain, i. 170

## Z

Zagazig, ii. 135  
 Zambesi, the, ii. 31  
 Zanzibar, ii. 31  
*Zealous*, H.M.S., i. 142  
 Zetland, Lord, i. 99  
 Zhob Mission, the, ii. 285  
 Zobrowski, i. 220  
 Zulu affairs, i. 259, 260

THE END.









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